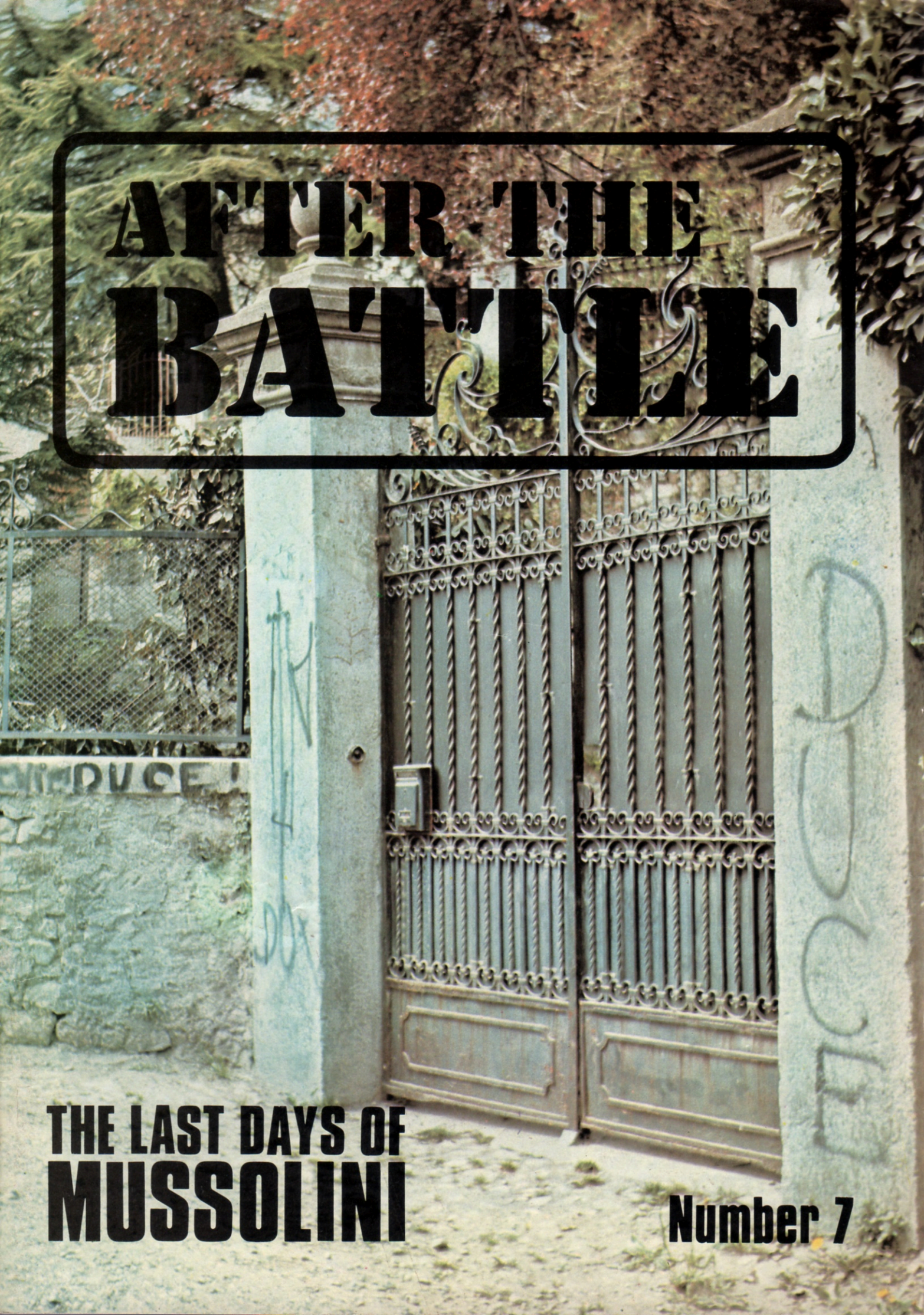
AFTER THE BATTLE



THE LAST DAYS OF MUSSOLINI

Number 7

AFTER THE BATTLE

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Edited by Winston G. Ramsey

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Centre Pages: Bren Carriers with infantry recce unit, 78th Division, North Africa.

Back Cover: Amphibious Jeep or 'Seep' restored by Peter Gray, founder-member and secretary of the Military Vehicle Conservation Group based at Worthing.

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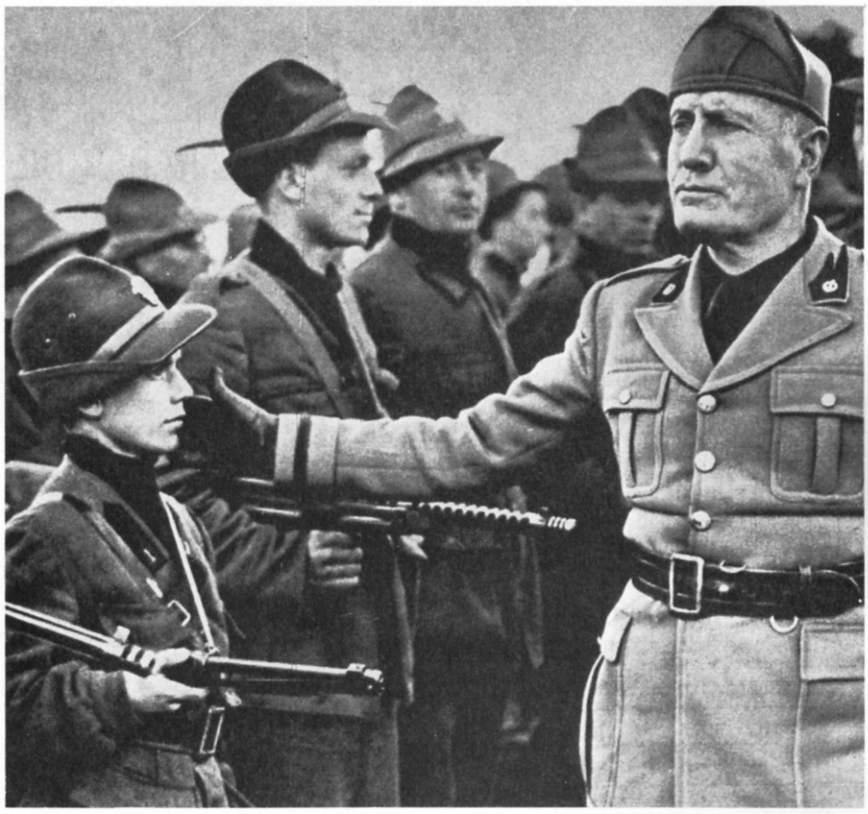


Top: The end of Fascism in Italy is imminent; Benito Mussolini with a child of the Italian Alpine Troops. Above: Mussolini with the German SS commander in Italy Oberstgruppenfuhrer Karl Wolff, during an inspection (Epoca).

THE LAST DAYS OF MUSSOLINI

Benito Mussolini, leader and dictator of the Italian people from October 1922, had, by April 1945. lost his popular support.

The seat of his puppet government was situated on the banks of Lake Garda in the Villa Feltrinelli. The Allies were advancing on the heels of the retreating German army which was falling back through Northern Italy to Switzerland and Bavaria. After saying goodbye to his mistress Claretta Petacci, Mussolini, wearing the uniform of the Fascist Militia, left the villa at Gardone on the west bank of the lake for Milan, to discuss terms for an honourable surrender.

Milan

Accompanied by an escort of troops led by Hauptsturmfuhrer Otto Kisnatt of the SD and Untersturmfuhrer Fritz Birzer of the SS, Il Duce arrived at the Milan Prefectura during the evening of Thursday, April 19.

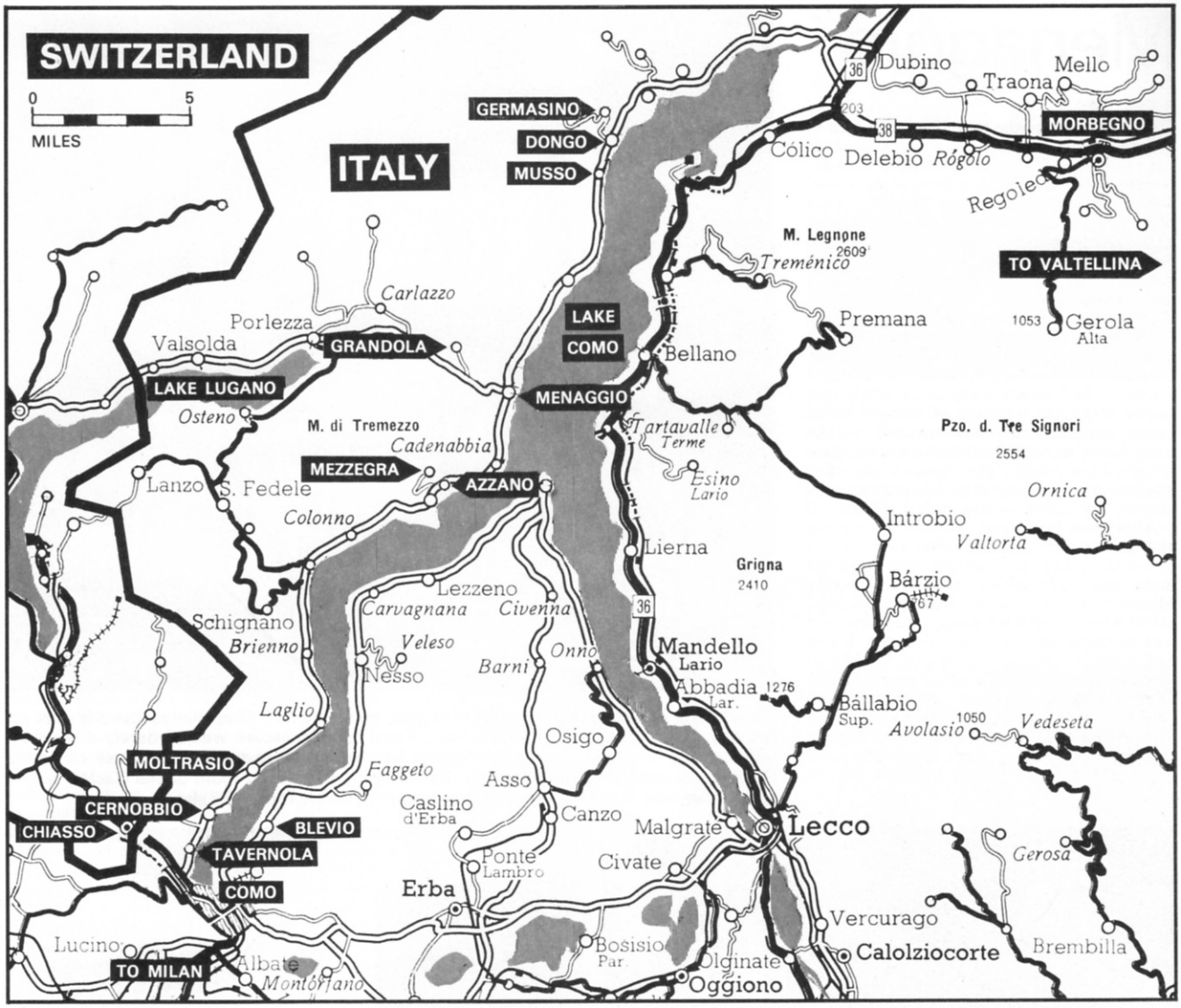
During the next five days Mussolini received an endless stream of visitors and the discussions swayed back and forth between surrender and fight. On the following Wednesday, April 25, at a final meeting with Cardinal Schuster, Archbishop of Milan and the CLNAI, (Italian Committee of Liberation for Upper Italy), a Communist-dominated partisan organisation fighting the Facists, he found that Oberstgruppenfuhrer Karl Wolff, German SS commander in Italy, had already approached both the Americans, and representatives of CLNAI for a separate surrender without informing him.

That evening, with reports of US troops only forty miles away, Mussolini's dream of a last stand in the Alps was, from a military viewpoint, impossible. The possibilities of escape to Switzerland or flight to Spain were considered by Mussolini—although he reasoned that he might be finished, Fascism was not. In a final speech he spoke of 'l'immortalita della patria e del Fascismo'. Demands were made by the CLNAI for his surrender to them, much to Mussolini's indignation, and when news was brought of the approach of a band of armed workers, together with talk of summary justice, Il Duce gave immediate orders to leave for Como. A squad of Blackshirts forced a path through the crowd and Mussolini, machine-gun over his shoulder, sitting in the back of an open Alfa-Romeo, preceded a convoy of about thirty vehicles. Inside another Alfa-Romeo, with Spanish number plates, followed Claretta Petacci with her brother, his wife and children. Two lorries of Waffen SS soldiers of 2/2 Flak Abteilung commanded by Untersturmfuhrer Birzer in a Kubelwagen, joined the procession, ostensibly as guards, despite the protests of Mussolini. Their orders from Hauptsturmfuhrer Kisnatt were never to let Mussolini out of their sight or to let him escape to Switzerland. Mussolini's son, Vittorio, followed last of all. The time was 5.00 p.m.

Above: Mussolini surrounded by members of his entourage at the Villa Feltrinelli. His wife, Rachele, is second from the left with his son, Vittorio, on his right (Epoca).

Top left: Mussolini looks tired as he is served lunch at the Villa Feltrinelli shortly before going to Milan (Epoca). Top right: Probably unaware of its past dramatic role, these children paddle near the Villa Feltrinelli, once the temporary seat of Mussolini's government. Above: Mussolini leaves the Prefectura at Milan on April 25, 1945 accompanied by Untersturmfuhrer Birzer.

Left: The Prefectura at Milan in the Corso Monforte, complete with guard, photographed by the editor. Above: Unable to gain permission to enter the courtyard, the editor virtually trod on the guard s toes to match the picture of Mussolini leaving with Birzer.



Como

Four hours later Mussolini arrived at the Prefectura in Como. He intended to wait for Alessandro Pavolini who had promised to bring three thousand loyal Fascists to support him in a last stand at Valtellina (patriotically called 'the last fight to the last bullet'). Whilst he waited, he wrote his last letter to his wife, Rachele, who by then had fled to the Villa Montero at Cernobbio. It read:

> Dear Rachele, I have come to the last phase in my life, the last page in my book. Perhaps we shall not meet again. That is why I have written this letter. I ask forgiveness for all the wrong which, involuntarily, I have done you. But you know that you are the only woman I have truly loved. I swear this to you before God and before our Bruno at this supreme moment. You know that I must go to the Valtellina. You, with the children, must try to get to the Swiss border. There, you will make a new life. I think they will not refuse you entry, because I have helped them in every way and you have nothing to do with politics. If this should fail, you must give yourself up to the Allies, who will perhaps be more generous than the Italians. I commend Anna and Romano to you, particularly Anna, who has most need of your care. You know how much I love them. Bruno from the height of the sky, will help us. I embrace you and the two children. Your Benito. (As the original letter was destroyed, the text above is as near as she and her children, who read and re-read the letter, can remember. Bruno was Mussolini's son who had been killed on June 22, 1941 testing a Piaggio P.108B bomber.)

Mussolini was desperately concerned about his files. Apart from two leather bags of papers he was carrying with him (believed to be evidence to help him in any trial he might have to face after the war), other documents and a reputed £2,765 in Bank of England notes, 2,150 gold sovereigns, $149,000, 278,000 Swiss francs, 18 million French francs, gold bars, objets d'art and other funds amounting to several million lire, were on their way in a lorry which had been in the convoy from Milan. It had failed to arrive, and news was brought by two Fascists that it had been intercepted by partisans. (Although not confirmed, it is believed most of this money eventually passed into the hands of the Italian Communist Party.)

Tired of waiting for the Blackshirts to arrive, Mussolini decided to move further up the lakeside. About 4.30 a.m. the following day, Thursday, April 26, a German sentry saw Mussolini come down the steps of the Prefectura. Untersturmfuhrer Birzer, hearing the sentry's shout, ran to his car and drove it across the entrance. Mussolini insisted on his right to go where he pleased—an argument ensued—relieved only by the approach of Birzer's men, weapons at the ready. Mussolini, resigned to acceptance of the German escort, drove out of the courtyard.

The western bank of Lake Como was the location for the final episode of Mussolini's life. The Vattellina mountains were to be the setting for his last stand. The name was to be synonymous with 'the last fight to the last bullet'.

The Prefectura at Como in the Via Volta.

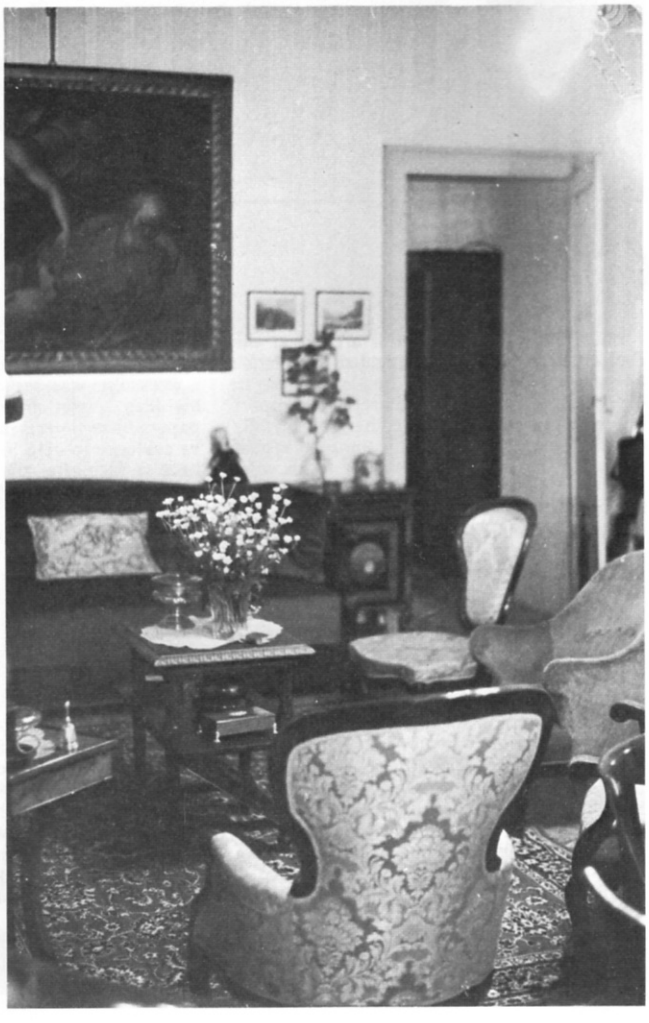
Menaggio

It was raining by the time Il Duce arrived at Menaggio, half-way up the western bank of Lake Como. At 5.30 a.m., he stopped his Alfa-Romeo on the main road in front of the school which was used as a Fascist barracks. After pacing up and down for a few minutes he went to the nearby house of Emilio Castelli, a local Fascist leader. There he lay down in the back bedroom and tried to sleep as the other cars and lorries came to a halt behind Birzer's Kubelwagen. The convoy had grown with the addition of two armoured cars equipped with 20mm cannons. Claretta Petacci joined Mussolini at the Castelli home.

One of the Fascists, Luigi Gatti, afraid that such a large concentration of vehicles would arouse suspicion and be reported to the Communist partisans, ordered most of them to go back down the road about five kilometres to Cadenabbia. They reluctantly obeyed, preferring to stay with Il Duce.

After three hours rest, Mussolini came out and gave orders for the other five cars to follow him inland to Grandola, high up in the mountains overlooking the lake. Seeing Mussolini about to leave, Birzer, suspicious, asked where they were going. Mussolini told him to follow and he would find out. Birzer had a job in keeping the six cars in sight as they ascended the steep winding road. Outside Grandola, one car turned sharp left and raced back up a narrow track to the Miravalle Hotel. The two cars in front of Birzer continued straight on, but Birzer made a quick decision and decided to follow the route of the car which had turned off left.

Above: The Blackshirt barracks at Menaggio, outside which Mussolini stopped his car on his way north. It is now again a school. From here Mussolini walked barely a hundred yards to the Via Castellino (photo below left) where he rested at the house of Emilio Castelli, the second door on the left. Below right: The sitting room of the Castelli house today; the door at the back leads to the bedroom where Mussolini slept.



Left: The drive of the Miravalle Hotel today—tourists' cars and our Land Rover take the place of the German and Italian vehicles. Above: The garden of the hotel where Mussolini walked with Elena Cucciati.

Grandola-Miravalle Hotel

When Birzer arrived at the hotel, he found that Mussolini with Claretta Petacci and three of his ministers had been walking in the garden. Having been ordered indoors by a German sentry, they were now in the hall and it was here that Birzer found them. By afternoon, the drive and forecourt of the hotel were packed with vehicles and the hotel with Fascists, now worried about the non-arrival of Pavolini and the Blackshirt reinforcements.

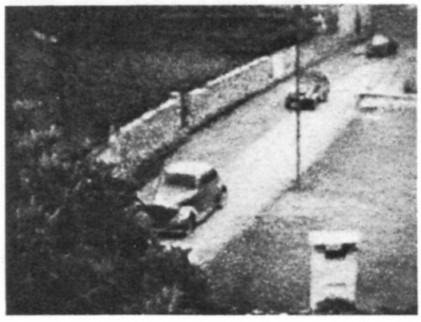
A violent argument ensued between Mussolini and Claretta when she found him talking to a young girl, Elena Cucciati, in the garden. She was the daughter of one of Mussolini's former mistresses and it was widely alleged that he was her father. The girl had offered to return by bicycle to Como to find out what had happened.

Three other Fascist ministers with false passports left just after 2.00 p.m. to try to cross the frontier to Switzerland, only a few kilometres away. Mussolini's depression deepened when one of these men returned later with the information that the other two had been captured by frontier guards (who had now joined forces with the partisans). Rachele Mussolini had also been turned back at the border at Chiasso. Mussolini and Claretta tried to escape from the Germans through a back door, but were stopped by an SS guard at the exit.

In the early hours of the following morning, Friday, April 27, Pavolini arrived from Como in an armoured car. His news was the end of any hope for Mussolini—the Blackshirts in Como had signed a surrender with the partisans—only a few had been persuaded to join him—twelve men. Soon afterwards Mussolini allowed Untersturmfuhrer Birzer to arrange for him and the remaining Fascists to join a Luftwaffe communications unit convoy of thirty-five trucks, commanded by Oberleutnant Fallmeyer, which was retreating north along the lakeside to Innsbruck. The convoy left, led by Pavolini in the armoured car, with seven loyal supporters. Mussolini, driving himself in his Alfa-Romeo, came next, followed by Birzer and the rest of the lorries. Among the last vehicles was the Alfa-Romeo with Spanish number plates containing Claretta, together with her brother and family. Mussolini's intention was to try to reach Merano in Austria—with an escort of 200 German soldiers, he said, 'we can go to the top of the world'.

Above: The hotel reception foyer and, below, the dining room. In the peace of an early morning thirty years later it is difficult to imagine the frantic scene which took place here when Mussolini waited in vain for his Fascist supporters.

Musso



Above left: Mussolini's Alfa-Romeo followed by Birzer's Kubelwagen photographed arriving at Musso (Epoca). With some difficulty we were able to match the photograph, although new villas make an exact comparison impossible.

They retraced their route down the mountain to Menaggio. There, outside the village, they were told by a man walking along the road that the partisans were everywhere. A few hundred yards further on they stopped and Pavolini persuaded Mussolini that he would be safer in the armoured car. After consulting Birzer, Mussolini climbed in. The convoy continued north for about ten kilometres until about 7.00 a.m. when three shots rang out and the convoy was halted by a large tree and boulders blocking the road in a narrow bend—this bend had the ironic name of Rocca di Musso. To the left, the rock rose vertically from the edge of the road; to the right was a sheer drop into the lake, the ideal place for an ambush. Two machine guns, manned by partisans, opened fire, which was returned from the armoured car, killing one of the partisans. Then a white flag was raised and three men approached the convoy to parley.

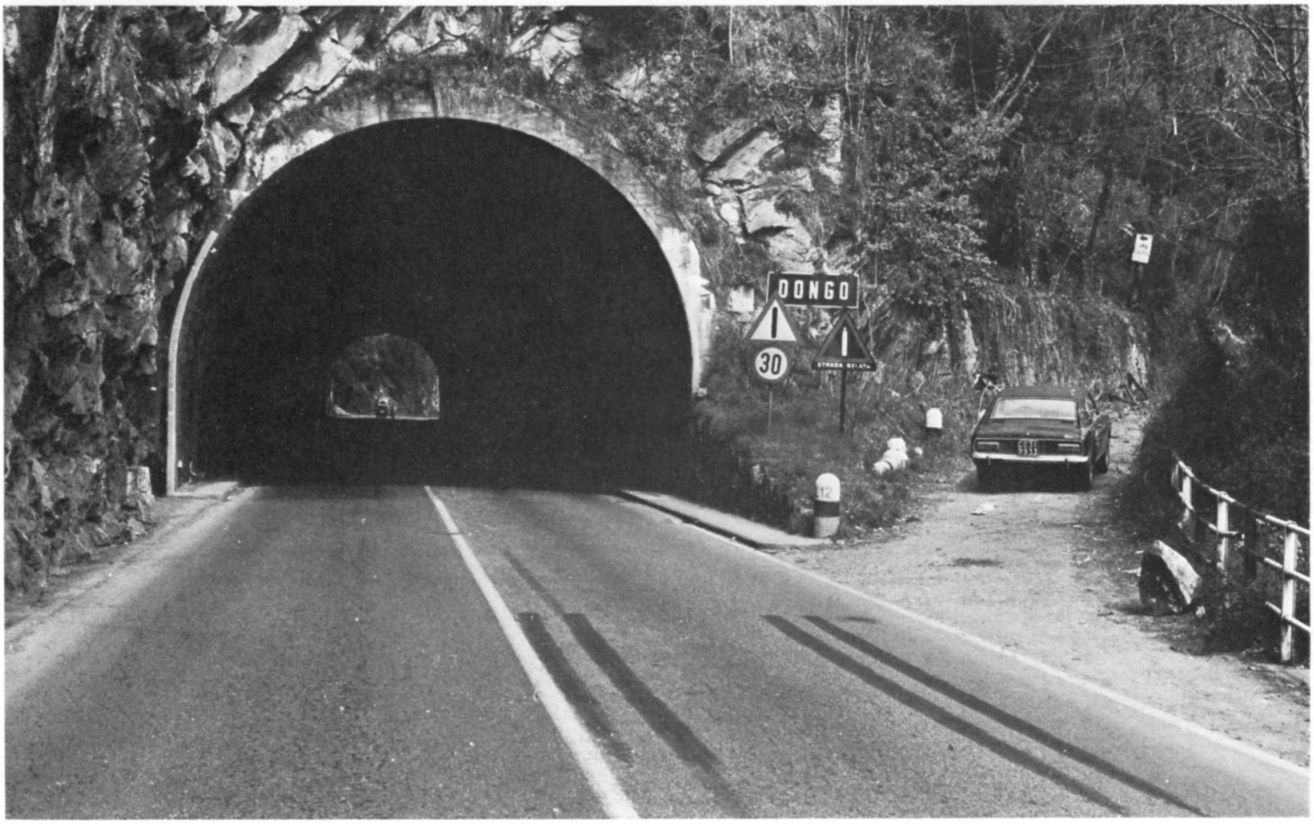
Francesco Barracu, one of the Fascists in the armoured car, went forward with Fallmeyer and Birzer. Davide Barbieri, a captain in the partisans' 52nd Garibaldi Brigade, told them that he would allow the Germans through but no Fascists. Fallmeyer protested and was told he must see the local partisan commander. After an argument Fallmeyer finally agreed and left to go to the partisan headquarters at Morbegno. When he returned at 2.00 p.m. the answer was the same—the German lorries could pass through provided they were searched for Fascists in the next town, Dongo, only a few minutes away.

Untersturmfuhrer Birzer suggested to Mussolini that he put on a German corporal's overcoat and helmet. At first he refused, suspecting Birzer had done a deal to exchange him for the guarantee of a free passage to Germany. When Birzer drove up in a lorry and stopped alongside the armoured car, the others persuaded him to change his mind. As the lorry drove down the road to Dongo, Birzer had to use all his strength to dislodge Claretta from the tail-board as she ran after the lorry.

The partisans had already been notified of Mussolini's presence in the convoy by a cyclist who had seen him in the armoured car—they were ready and waiting when the vehicles drove down the hill into Dongo.

Below: We could not believe our eyes when, approaching Dongo, we found the old road that Mussolini took, barely wide enough for one car, left exactly as it was and now bypassed by a new tunnel.

Top of opposite page: A hundred yards along this old road is the actual site of the ambush, a perfect spot even thirty years later with the vertical cliff on the left and a sheer drop on the right. In the background, Dongo.



Dongo

At 3.15 p.m. the German lorries, followed by the Spanish-plated Alfa, which was the only Italian vehicle permitted to follow, arrived in the square. The remaining Fascists, still standing by the cars in the road at the Rocca di Musso, were captured by the partisans, most of them surrendering without a struggle.

After arriving in the square, the lorries halted and the inspection began. In the third lorry, registration WH529507, one of the partisans, Giuseppe Negri, spotted a German soldier who appeared to be asleep. He noticed the German had a machine gun across his knees and when told by the other Germans that he was drunk, he affected to believe them. He jumped down from the lorry and went to fetch the deputy political commissar of the brigade, Urbano Lazzaro.

When Lazzaro reached the squatting figure in the Luftwaffe corporal's overcoat he addressed him, 'Kamarade', then, receiving no response, 'Excellency' and 'Cavaliere, Benito Mussolini'. Slowly Mussolini answered, 'Yes I am Mussolini, I will make no trouble'.

Mussolini got down from the lorry and the gun and helmet were taken from him. He was searched and a loaded revolver was taken from his pocket. The crowd began to cheer when they saw who had been captured.

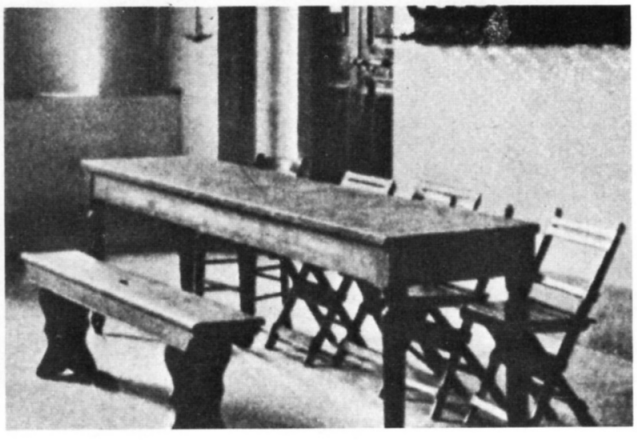
Escorted across the square to the Prefectura, he was allowed to sit down in the Mayor's office. Questions were fired at him from the excited people who crowded in around him. He removed the German greatcoat and revealed his Fascist Militia uniform.

The German convoy was then allowed to continue north, and word was sent to Como to report the capture of Mussolini to the CLNAI and to ask for instructions. By then it was 3.30 p.m. The partisan commander in Dongo, Count Pierluigi Bellini delle Stelle, decided he would have to move his prisoner to a safer hiding place in case an attempt was made to rescue him that night. By 7.00 p.m. he had made up his mind.

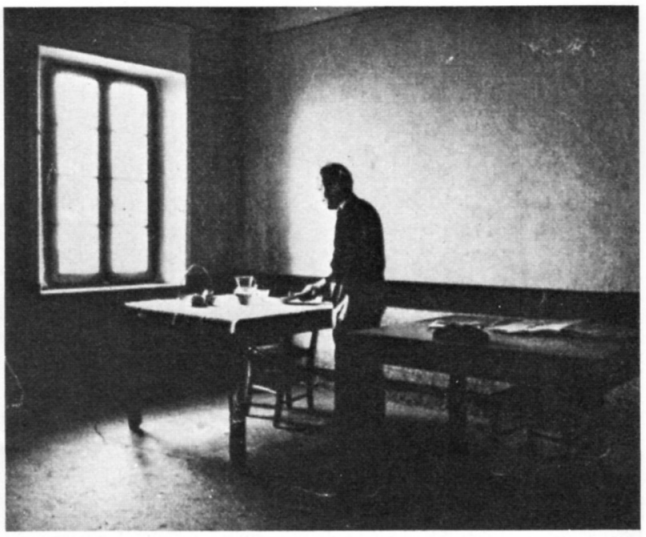
Count Bellini delle Stelle, commanding the partisans' 52nd Garibaldi Brigade (Epoca).

One of the partisans, Aldo Castelli wears the German helmet taken from Mussolini in Dongo square (Epoca).

Left: Another of the partisan leaders, Pierino Dell'Era in the beret, photographed after Mussolini's capture (Epoca). Above: Our comparison taken at Dongo nearly thirty years later.



Above: Another partisan of the 52nd Brigade holds the Luftwaffe overcoat taken from Mussolini which he was wearing as a disguise (Epoca). Centre right: Thirty years later it is siesta time, and Dongo is deserted. Except for faded paintwork the hotel remains exactly as it was. Right: The room in Dongo Town Hall which we were not shown—where Mussolini was interrogated.



Above left: The customs barracks at Germasino, high on the mountain overlooking Dongo where Mussolini was taken by Count Bellini, turned out to be an ordinary house. Unfortunately the owner was out when we called but the window to the upstairs room where Mussolini was imprisoned is shown, photo above right. Above: At Moltrasio the cars, taking Mussolini and Claretta Petacci south to transfer them to a boat for Blevio, stopped outside the Hotel Imperiale. Today the hotel is derelict hardly living up to its impressive name. Below: The path leading to the De Maria farm (on the right) at Mezzegra up which Mussolini and Claretta stumbled in the rain.

Germasino

The road to Germasino winds tortuously up into the mountains behind Dongo. It was a slow journey in the blinding rain. Reaching the mountain village, Mussolini was taken to the customs post and there the partisans lit a fire and prepared a meal. At 11 p.m. Mussolini retired to bed upstairs in a small room, where the door was bolted behind him. Meanwhile, in Dongo, Claretta Petacci had been recognised and detained masquerading, together with her brother in the Spanish Alfa, as the Spanish Consul. Then, at 11.30 p.m. the order came from Como to transfer Mussolini to a villa at Blevio, on the eastern bank of the lake, not far from Como. This would mean driving south down the western shore and then transferring Mussolini by boat to Blevio, so avoiding Como and the risk of rescue.

By 1.30 a.m. on Saturday, April 28, Count Bellini had collected his prisoner and, having rendezvoused en route with a car bringing Claretta Petacci, proceeded south. Mussolini was heavily bandaged to help avoid identification.

Reaching Moltrasio, the cars stopped in front of the Hotel Imperiale. It was quiet in Moltrasio; the boat had not arrived and firing could be heard in Como seven kilometres away. Count Bellini was not going to risk losing his prisoner to the Americans! He decided to return north to Mezzegra which they had passed through on their way down. Near there was a farmhouse whose owner was trustworthy, and who had previously sheltered partisans on the run.

Mezzegra

The prisoners reached Azzano on the lakeside, where the road turned left to Mezzegra, at 3.15 a.m. The cars stopped and they had to walk up a steep path to the De Maria farm. It was still raining hard and Mussolini's spirits had fallen as, blanket over his shoulders, Claretta on his arm, he stumbled up the path.

Reaching the farmhouse, Giacomo De Maria lit a fire and offered the two prisoners something to eat. Claretta accepted substitute coffee. De Maria's wife prepared a bedroom by turning her two sons out of a double bed and sending them to the hay loft. Mussolini and his mistress were then taken upstairs. Two partisans, Guglielmo Cantoni and Guiseppe Frangi, were posted outside the open door and Mussolini spent the rest of the night in peace.

Mussolini's executioners. Left: Walter Audisio, alias Colonel Valerio, the man who fired the fatal shots. Centre: Aldo Lampredi, alias Guido Conti, and above, Michele Moretti, alias Pietro Gatti.

However, eighty kilometres away in Milan events were taking a different turn. At 11.00 p.m. a meeting of the CLNAI was held. In the presence of the more scrupulous non-Communist members of the committee, who felt bound by the terms of the armistice which provided that Mussolini be handed over to the Allies, it was agreed that Walter Audisio, Communist liaison officer, often known as Colonel Valerio, should have the mission of bringing Mussolini back to Milan. Later on, however, when the others had gone, the Communists said that this meant 'bringing him back dead'. Palmiro Togliatti, as head of the Communist Party in Italy, had already ordered the execution of Mussolini and his mistress as soon as they could be identified.

In order to forestall the Americans, who were making repeated attempts to find Mussolini, a telegram was sent at 3.00 a.m. by the Milan Committee to Allied Headquarters at Siena. It read:

> CVL to AGH sorry could not deliver Mussolini who judged by popular tribunal was executed same place where fifteen patriots previously executed by Nazi-Fascists.

Walter Audisio left Milan at 7.00 a.m. on the morning of the 28th, while Mussolini still slept, accompanied by Aldo Lampredi, Vice-Commandant General of the Garibaldi Brigades, in a black Lancia Aprilia, RM001, followed by a commercial vehicle bearing the words Societa Elettrica Ovesticino and containing twelve partisans. In his pocket he had a pass signed by the American OSS liaison officer, Captain Emilio Q. Daddario, who had the mission to capture Mussolini alive for trial. The pass had been obtained via an intermediary between the Partisans and the Allies, Dr. Guastoni. It gave 'Colonel Valerio' free circulation with his armed escort on CLNAI business.

En route, Audisio commandeered a large yellow removal lorry, and at 2.10 p.m. drove into the square at Dongo. At first the party was mistaken for a rescue attempt and fired on by the partisans. However, Audisio soon made it plain who he was and what his orders were. Within an hour he had learnt where Mussolini was being held and had left to return south to Mezzegra—sitting next to Geninazza, the driver of a commandeered black Fiat 1100; acting as guide was Brigade Vice-Commissar Michele Moretti.

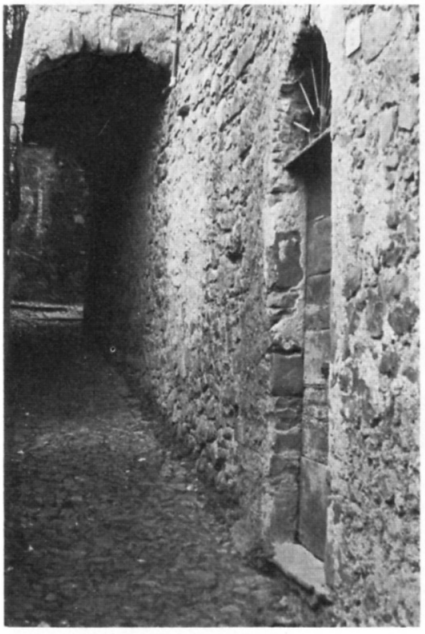
The bed at the De Maria farmhouse in which Mussolini and Claretta spent their last night; we are told their only night together.

The two prisoners at the De Maria farmhouse got up around 11.00 a.m. The storm had abated. They were offered a simple peasants' breakfast and their guards told them that the Americans (1st US Armoured Division), had taken Como.

Soon after 4.00 p.m. footsteps were heard in the yard. Audisio burst inside; he was wearing a long brown mackintosh and a red, green and white scarf and carrying a sub-machine gun. Running up the stairs he threw open the bedroom door, telling Mussolini he had come to rescue him. Urging Mussolini and Claretta Petacci to finish dressing, he hurried them out of the room, almost pushing them down the stairs in his anxiety to get out of the farm.

They stumbled up the steep path, Claretta, in high-heeled shoes, carrying two bags with two coats over her arm. Reaching the road they turned left to the small square where three women were washing their clothes in the village washing-trough. Walking through a tunnel-like archway crossing the road leading down from the square, they reached Audisio's car.

Audisio pushed his prisoners into the car which had to pass through the archway to the square to turn round. Audisio was riding on the mudguard whilst Lampredi and Moretti stood on the running boards.



The cobbled path from the De Maria farmhouse (door, right), up which Mussolini and Claretta were taken to the car.

Above: The De Maria farmhouse at Mezzegra as it appears today. The actual room in which Mussolini spent his last night has been demolished — the broken wall and sealed up doorway showing where it stood.

Above: The square at Mezzegra. Audisio marched his prisoners through the tunnel archway to his car which then had to drive back to the square to turn round.

Above: Time passes slowly in Italy and the square has remained unchanged. The communal washing trough is still used, as it was then, by the village women.

The Villa Belmonte

About three hundred yards further on the car stopped outside the gates of the Villa Belmonte. Standing back, Audisio ordered Mussolini and Claretta out of the car and pronounced the sentence of death. Claretta threw her arms around Mussolini, pleading with Audisio. Warning her that she would be shot if she didn't move away, he pulled the trigger of his sub-machine-gun.

Nothing happened and Claretta turned on him, seizing the barrel of the gun. Reaching in his pocket Audisio drew his pistol which also failed to fire! Calling to Michele Moretti to give him his weapon, a French MAS 7.65 sub-machine-gun, he fired and with his first burst he killed Claretta. Mussolini, who was facing him squarely holding open his coat, asked him to shoot him in the chest. Audisio obliged and Mussolini fell back against the stone wall. As he lay on the ground breathing heavily, Audisio shot him again in the chest with his pistol, working this time. It was 4.10 p.m. After picking up the cartridge cases, ten in all, Audisio left Cantoni and Frangi in charge of the bodies whilst he returned to Dongo.

Top: Audisio's car driven by Geninazza stopped outside this gateway; Mussolini and Claretta were ordered out. The two partisans who had followed on foot, Cantoni and Frangi were posted at the hairpin bend between the square and the villa. Aldo Lampredi stood between them and the car whilst Michele Moretti was fifteen yards downhill towards the lake. There was no escape. Audisio shot Claretta first then Mussolini. Today slogans to the Duce are painted on both sides of the gateway but the marble cross which once stood here (see picture page 25) has been stolen. Right: Mussolini's last view — of Lake Como.

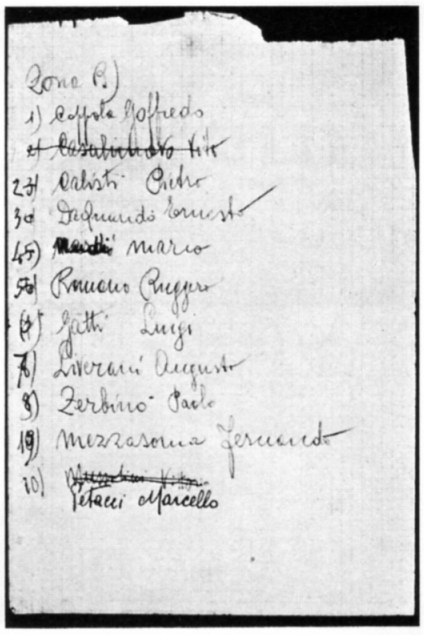
Reaching Dongo, Audisio ordered the Mussolini supporters who had been captured at the road block at Musso to be lined up in the road facing the lake. They could be divided into three groups, according to their importance. The first consisted of eight faithful Fascists from Mussolini's government: Alessandro Pavolini (Secretary of the Fascist Party, already wounded trying to escape into the lake); Fernando Mezzasoma (Minister of Popular Culture); Paolo Zerbino (Minister of the Interior); Augusto Liverani (Minister of Communications); Paolo Porta (Inspector of the Fascist Party); Franceso Barracu (Secretary of the Fascist Council of Northern Italy); Idreno Utimperghe (Blackshirt Brigade Commandant) and Vito Casalinuovo (Mussolini's adjutant).

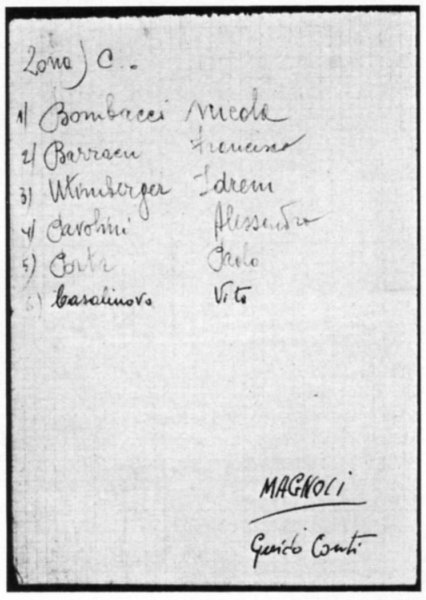
The second group consisted of Nicola Bombacci (Mussolini's faithful old friend); Luigi Gatti (Mussolini's secretary); Mario Nudi (President of the Fascist's Agricultural Association) and Ruggero Romano (Minister of Public Works).

Finally, a third group of three people were to make up the fifteen that Audisio had to execute as a reprisal against the Fascist execution of the same number of patriots in Milan. They were Ernesto Daquanno (Journalist); Alfredo Coppola (President of the Fascist Cultural Institute) and Pietro Calistri (a Captain in the Air Force). Valerio, who chose those to be executed, thought the latter was Mussolini's pilot.

Marcello Petacci, Claretta's brother, whom Audisio thought was Mussolini's son Vittorio, jumped into the lake and was shot dead.

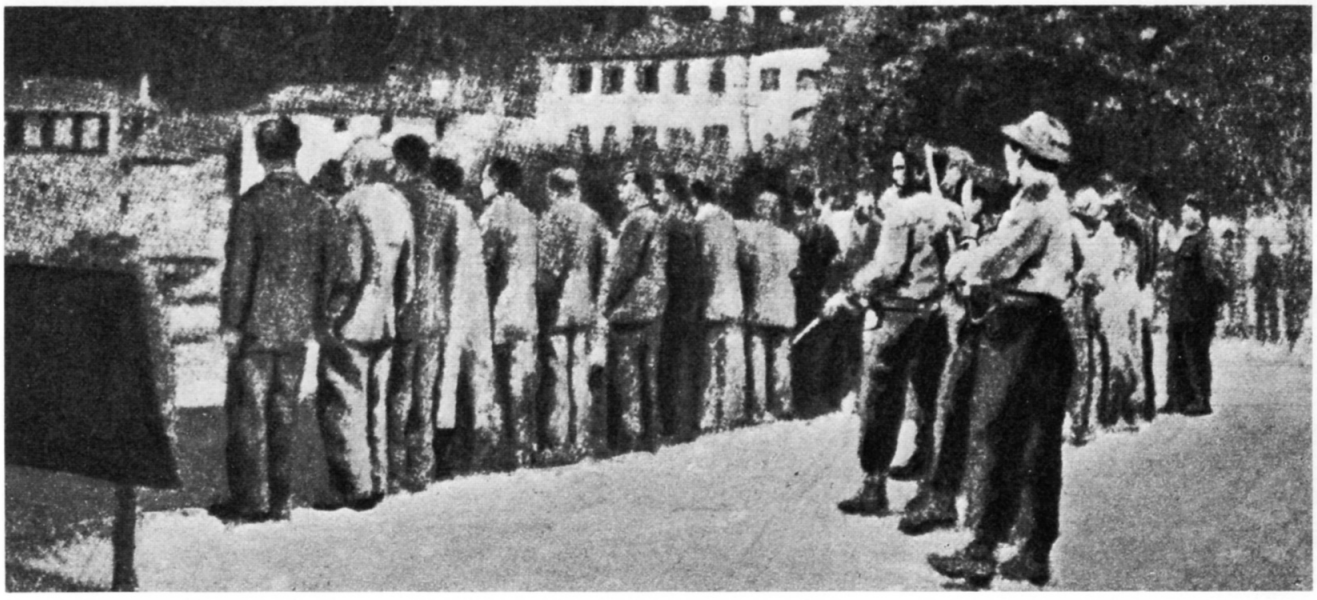
A similar number of partisans with submachine-guns lined up behind them and, at the signal, the fifteen were mown down. The bodies were thrown in the yellow removal van which was driven south to Milan, stopping at Azzano on the way to add the corpses of Mussolini and Claretta which Geninazza had collected in the back of the car.


Zona B.)
1) Coppola Alfredo
~~2) Casalinuovo Vito~~
2) Calisti Pietro
3) Daquanno Ernesto
4) ~~Nudi~~ Mario
5) Romano Ruggero
6) Gatti Luigi
7) Liverani Augusto
8) Zerbino Paolo
9) Mezzasoma Fernando
10) ~~Vittorio Mussolini~~ Petacci Marcello

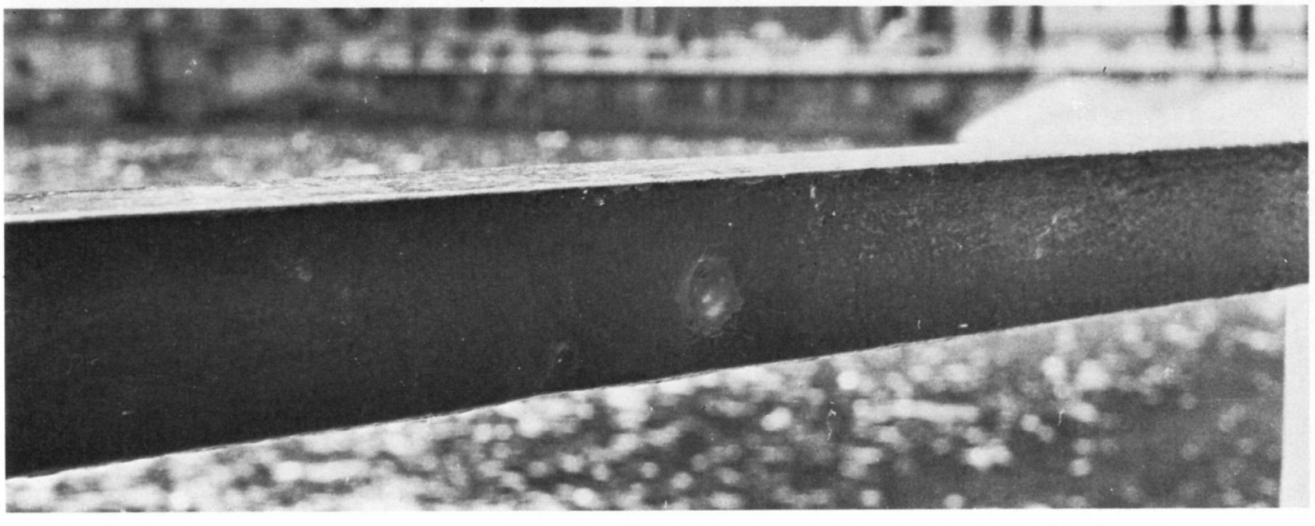

Zona) C.
1) Bombacci Nicola
2) Barracu Francesco
3) Utimperger Idreno
4) Cavalini Alessandro
5) Porta Paolo
6) Casalinuovo Vito

MAGNOLI
Guido Conti

Above: The Golden Hall in the Dongo town hall where the Fascist government ministers were held prior to their execution. On the right, is the list of names prepared by Audisio for execution at Dongo signed by Guido Conti, the alias for Aldo Lampredi. Note that Vittorio Mussolini's name has been crossed out and that of Claretta's brother , Marcello, inserted instead (Epoca). Below: The fifteen ministers are lined up in the road outside the town hall facing the lake. Following page — Top: The Fascists are mown down — smoke from the guns drifts away. Centre: The exact spot today; the railings still bear the marks from the fusillade.



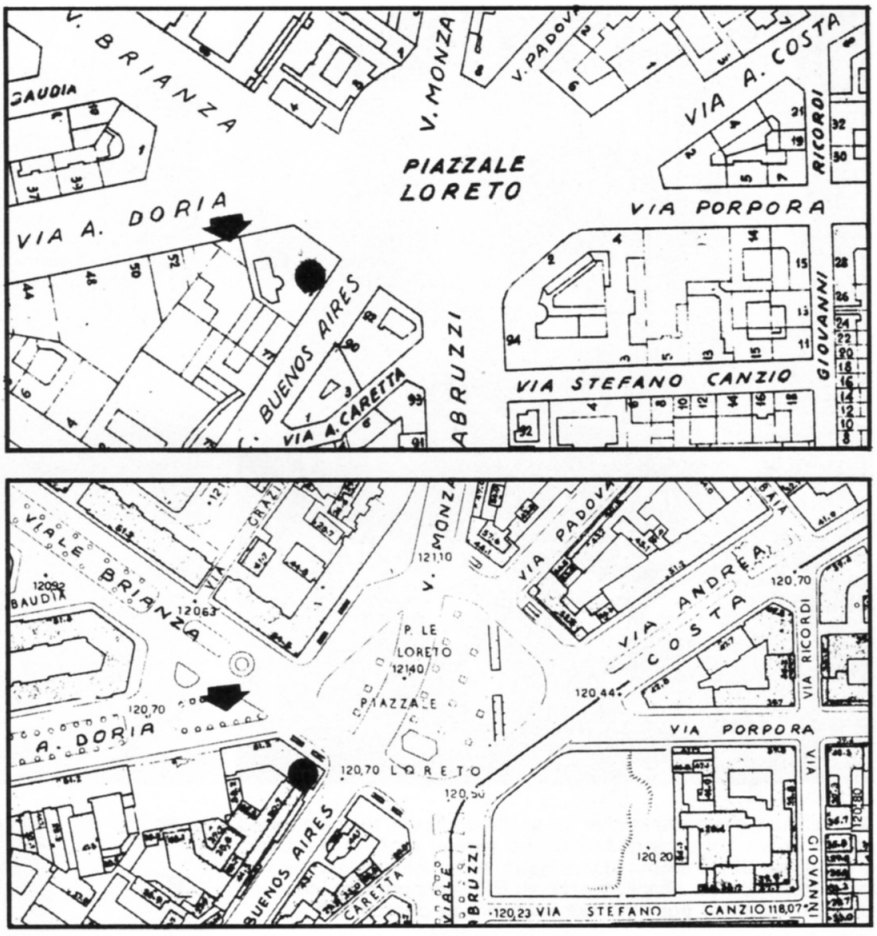
dancing
club



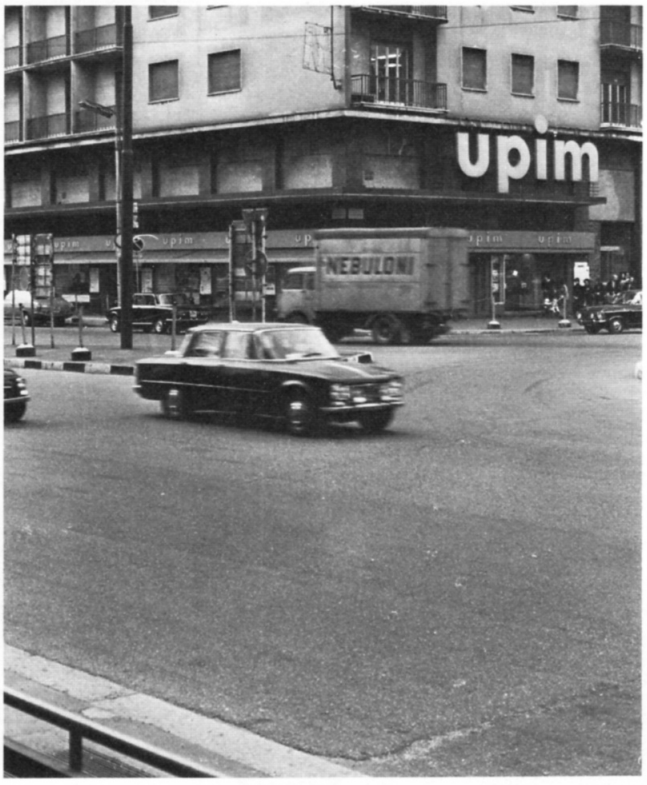
Milan

Later that night the van had arrived in front of a garage on the Piazzale Loreto, having passed through several American road blocks on the way. Nearby was the spot were fifteen Italian hostages had been shot on German orders nine months previously. The corpses were tipped out and at dawn were arranged in order. It was Sunday, April 29, 1945. Hitler and Eva Braun had just been married in a bunker 600 miles away in Berlin. A crowd began to gather and two men aimed repeated kicks at Mussolini's head; others shot at the bodies with pistols and shotguns. The bodies were trampled on and then the corpses of Mussolini and Claretta were raised, upside down, to be tied to the girders of the garage roof. Another Fascist, Party Secretary Achille Starace, who had been captured and brought to the square, was shot and his body was added to those on the ground. Other bodies were strung up for the crowd to see and insult.

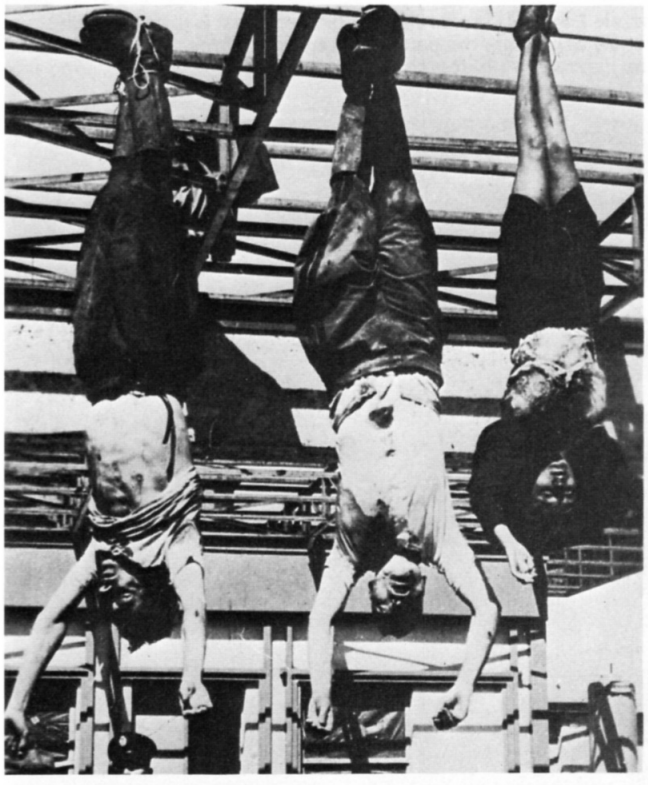
Above: Together in death, Mussolini and Claretta are laid side by side in the Piazzale Loreto. This picture was taken by a British soldier and given to the editor.



Above: Maps of the Piazzale Loreto as it was in April 1945 and as it is today showing the position of the garage (spot) and where the partisans were shot (arrow)(Tempo). Below: This was the scene in the Piazzale as photographers and townspeople milled around the bodies lying on the garage forecourt.



Above: An old lady shakes her fist at the bodies as they are raised upside down from the girders of the garage roof. In the background the UPIM store. Above right: Although the garage has been replaced with a bank, the rebuilt UPIM department store still gives a reference point for our comparison photograph.



Above: Mussolini and Claretta, hanging from the garage roof, together with an unnamed Fascist on the left (Associated Press). Party Secretary Achille Starace was marched to the square (photo right) and executed (photo opposite) on the spot where partisans had been shot by Fascists on German orders nine months previously (Epoca). Today this spot is marked by a memorial stone. Centre right: The Banca Popolare now occupies the site of the garage — the monument stone is around the corner behind the bank.

Later the bodies were cut down and Mussolini's was buried in a secret grave in Musocco Cemetery in the city, one presumes by loyal Fascists to prevent the body being stolen.

Almost a year later, on April 23, 1946, three Fascists living in Milan, Domenico Leccisi, Mario Rana and Antonio Parozzi, dug up the coffin from Musocco. The remains, transferred to a small trunk 40 inches long by 24 inches high, were taken to a small villa near Milan. Father Zucca and Father Parini of the church of Saint Angelo, Milan, were asked to hide the body. At first they refused, but on May 7 buried the body in the grounds of the convent attached to the church.

When the three Fascists were arrested by police in August, the trunk was dug up and moved to the Certosa Di Pavia, a Carthusian Monastery at Pavia, and given to the custody of the Prior, Father Lamberto. Here the trunk was placed in a built-in cupboard in a room on the ground floor, but only for one day. It was then discovered by the police and removed to Police Headquarters in Milan, and later to the mortuary, where a post-mortem examination was performed.

On August 12, the Chief of Police of Milan, Signor Agnesina, together with the help of another policeman, took the body to be hidden officially, this hiding place known only to themselves, and Mario Scelba, the Italian Prime Minister. The hiding place was not disclosed, although, as the car returned within fifty minutes, it was assumed it was not far from Milan.

Donna Rachele, Mussolini's wife, kept up a barrage of requests for the return of her husband's body. The stone coffin which had been prepared for his remains at the family vault at Predappio was left open to show people that she did not have the body.

On August 30, 1957, the body was finally returned to Donna Rachele by Police Chief Agnesina. It had been hidden in Cerro Maggiore in the care of Father Caulo Da Milano and, following an autopsy to prove its identity by the same three professors who examined the body in 1946, Il Duce finally came home to rest in the little town where he was born, seventy-four years earlier.

When the Americans arrived in Milan they ordered the bodies be removed from the Piazzale Loretto. The bodies were labelled (Mussolini 167, Claretta 166) and an autopsy was performed prior to burial. Here a Milan partisan examines the labels (Epoca).

The final days of Mussolini are fascinating, surrounded as they are in mystery and intrigue. When we went to Italy in April 1974 there were several gaps in the story and it has taken some time and effort to piece together, as near as one can, the events which had taken place twenty-nine years previously. We visited and took photographs at all the locations pertinent to the story, matching up the few photographs taken during those last days.

Our visit was made all the more interesting by the premiere and release for the Italian cinemas of 'Mussolini Ultimo Atto', a film reconstruction of his last days filmed at some of the actual locations.

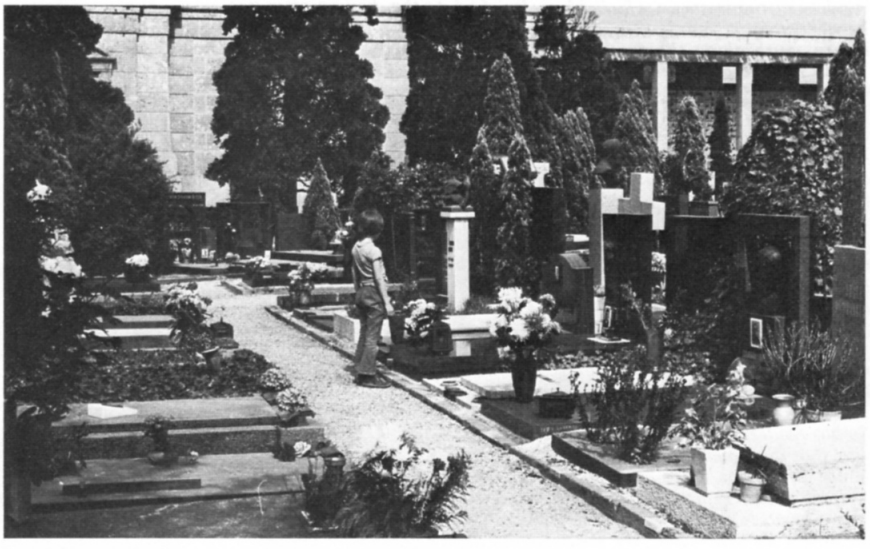
We travelled the exact route taken by Mussolini, starting at the Villa Feltrinelli on Lake Garda. Here, just north of Gardone, the villa stands on the lakeside in its own grounds protected by high walls, locked gates and fierce dogs. Our requests to the caretaker to enter to take pictures were refused, but by walking down to the lakeside where some children were paddling, we were able to take our photograph.

The trail then led to the Prefectura (or Governor's Residence) at Milan, in the Corso Monforte. Here we wanted to match the comparison picture of Mussolini leaving with Untersturmfuhrer Birzer for Como. The entrance to the courtyard was guarded and again our requests to photograph were denied, although pressed to higher authority. However, the editor suddenly realised that the picture had only been taken a few feet inside the entrance and, using a telephoto lens with the editor literally treading on the toes of the guard, our comparison was made.

From Milan we travelled to Como and, with no comparison pictures, a photograph of the outside of the Prefectura sufficed.

At Como we reached the shores of Lake

Left: Mussolini's body is sealed in a plain wooden box before its burial in the Milan Cemetery at Musocco. Above: The grave in Campo 16 at Musocco where Mussolini and the ministers executed at Dongo were buried (Epoca).



Top: The grave being photographed by Associated Press cameramen on the morning of April 23, 1946 after Mussolini's body was removed by Fascist supporters during the night (Keystone). Above: The editor's son stands on the same spot. According to Italian practice at the cemetery desperate for space, every ten years the graves are changed, the previous occupiers being relegated to small boxes in the cemetery walls visible in the background.

Como where, along the western road, the 340 d.i.r., the main action had taken place. We motored north and arrived at Menaggio, halfway up the lakeside. The Blackshirt barracks was still standing on the left-hand side of the road and we stopped where Mussolini had halted his car.

Mussolini had rested at the house of Emilio Castelli, secretary of the local Fascist party; we wanted a photograph of the room! Through our friendly hotel proprietor, an old lady who knew Castelli personally, a meeting was arranged for the following morning. When the appointed time came, we were escorted to No. 1 Via Castellino Da Castello, and introduced to Emilio Castelli's brother, who now occupies the house, who proudly showed us his sumptuously furnished rooms and allowed us to take photographs.

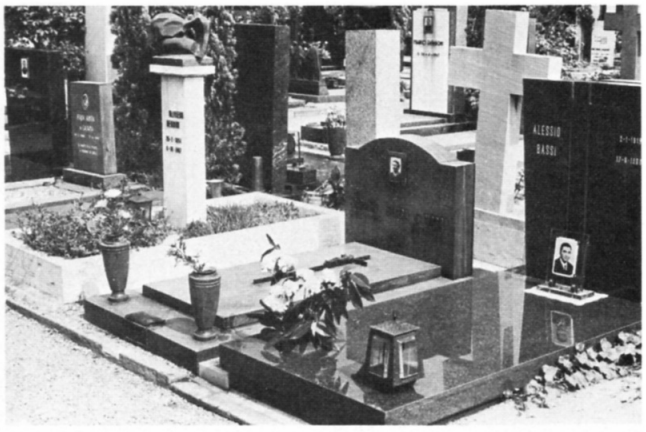
After a rest Mussolini had turned inland from Menaggio up to the Miravelle Hotel. It was also one of the locations used in making the Mussolini film, a fact which the proprietor, a Frenchman, was proud to tell us. He kindly allowed us to take as many pictures as we wanted, being very publicity minded. Except for the rather luxurious decor inside, the hotel would seem to be as it was when Mussolini walked in the garden.

From the hotel we returned down the winding hill road to the lakeside. Turning left, as Mussolini had done, we proceeded to the site of the ambush—Rocca di Musso. On the way, just before Musso itself, we had to match up the pictures taken of the cars arriving in 1945. This took us some time as the hillside is now covered with new villas, but was finally accomplished by standing precariously on the unfinished balcony of a new building.

When we reached the headland overlooking Dongo we couldn't believe our eyes. There the coast road had been drilled straight through the solid rock (we had seen similar tunnels elsewhere on the route), but incredibly the original old narrow road remained, although closed off, skirting the bulging rock. With a screech of brakes (not the skid marks in the photo) we stopped and were able to photograph the exact place of the ambush which must still be exactly as it was thirty years ago.

By now the editor was really getting excited and we entered Dongo in our Land Rover in true Italian style. Our enthusiasm was soon deflated when we were told that the original room at the Prefectura, in which Mussolini was questioned, was 'finito'. Requests to see where it had been were denied and even offers of the valuable local currency proved fruitless! Instead, we were shown the 'Golden Hall' and told that Mussolini was taken here—a fact which is doubtful, although the Fascist ministers were held here before their execution. However, in the square outside we were able to match up several photographs including the place of execution of the fifteen Fascists. The railings still bear the mark of bullets from the partisans' guns.

From Dongo we climbed a steep winding road to the so-called barracks at Germasino—



Above left: This is the photograph which was being taken in the picture on the previous page. Cemetery officials examine the empty grave (Associated Press). Above right: Alessio Bassi has occupied the grave since 1966 but will be removed in 1976. Left: when the three Fascists stole the body they left this sign nearby with a note reading 'At last, Duce, you are with us. We will surround you with roses, but the perfume of your virtues will be stronger than that of roses'. The note was signed 'Democratic Fascists'.

which turned out to be an ordinary stone house. Unfortunately the owner was out and not due to return that day, so after photographing the outside, showing the upstairs window of the room in which Mussolini had been kept for a few hours, we descended to return south along the coast road.

Our next stop was to be the one Mussolini made, by then a prisoner, outside the Hotel Imperiale at Moltrasio. Readers will remember it was from here that the partisans heard firing in Como and decided it was too dangerous to proceed further south. The old hotel by the lakeside is now derelict and deserted, and normally one would by-pass the town centre on the coast road at this point using a short fast inland route. Our enquiries for the location of this hotel always produced the same answer 'chuiso' (closed) without giving us the location!

From here the partisans had returned north, so once again we drove back along our tracks to Mezzegra.

Our Mussolini expert, living in England, Sergio Andreanelli, had told us prior to our visit that if we could find the De Maria farmhouse this would be the jackpot. Being Italian, and therefore probably not considered by the locals to be impartial, he had met a wall of silence in Mezzegra. We steamed in, the mad English, to be escorted personally direct to the farmhouse. Unfortunately the actual room in which Mussolini and Claretta Petacci spent their last night has been demolished (why we could not find out), so we had to be content with a picture of the exterior of the farm.

From here, on foot, we walked Mussolini's last steps in silence. Through the square, where women were still washing clothes, under the archway, all unchanged except that this was a bright sunny day thirty years later. Rounding a hairpin bend we came to the site of the last fateful drama—Villa Belmonte. It is probably not possible for anybody other than an Italian to appreciate what this gateway means to them today. When we reached it 'Duce' slogans marked the spot where Mussolini fell, but where we had expected to see the marble cross which had been erected there, it was gone. This, we were told, had been stolen one night. Italians today still take sides, for or against Mussolini!

Returning to Milan, we already knew from what people had told us that Piazzale Loreto had changed beyond recognition. Although the garage disappeared in the early 1950s, the position of the rebuilt UPIM store still makes a comparison possible. Near the garage site (which is now occupied by a bank) is a memorial to the partisans shot by Fascists on the orders of the Germans.

Following the story to Musocco Cemetery, we wanted to match pictures of the open grave in 1946, taken after the body had been stolen. Current practice at the cemetery is to disinter the bodies after ten years burial and then place the bones in an 'ossario', a small box in the walls of the cemetery. These ossario walls had been extended since the 1946 picture was taken and thousands of new burials have taken place. With the background to our comparison photograph lost, we searched for several hours before finding the exact spot where Mussolini's body had been buried—in Campo 16, Grave 1195. Since 1946 probably two other bodies have occupied this plot and presently Alsesso Bassi rests there. However, one vast area, Campo 10, still contains 1008 Fascist bodies slaughtered in the Communist purges of 1945.

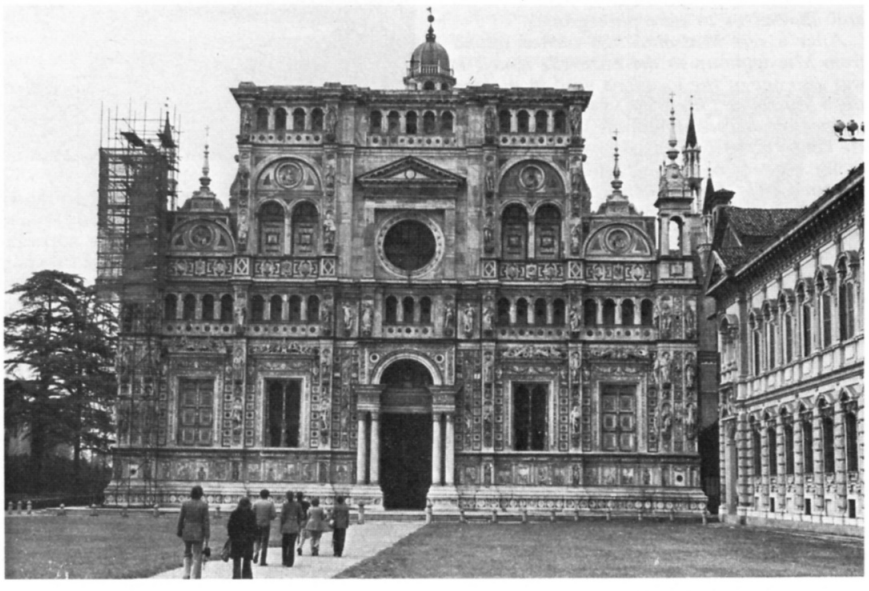
The long drive to Predappio, near the Adriatic Coast, followed and was broken only by our visit to the Certosa di Pavia. At the Abbey, although we were shown the room where the disinterred body of Mussolini was kept for a day in August 1946, we were not allowed to take any photographs.

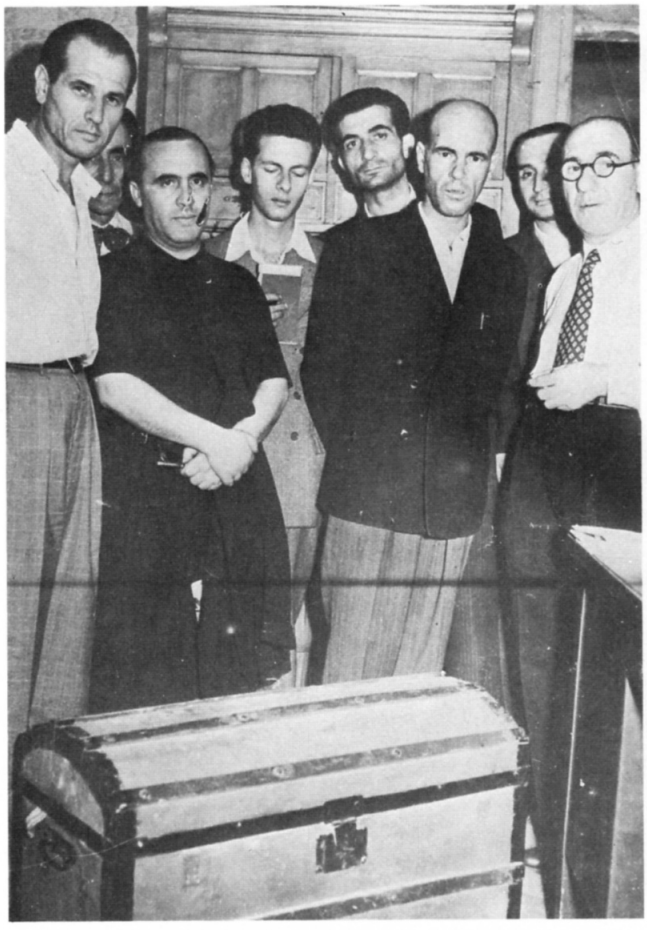
Predappio villagers obviously still revere the memory of Mussolini and we were conducted by two old campaigners to the Mussolini vault beside the Tenth Century Church in the Cimitero Di S. Cassiano in Pennino.

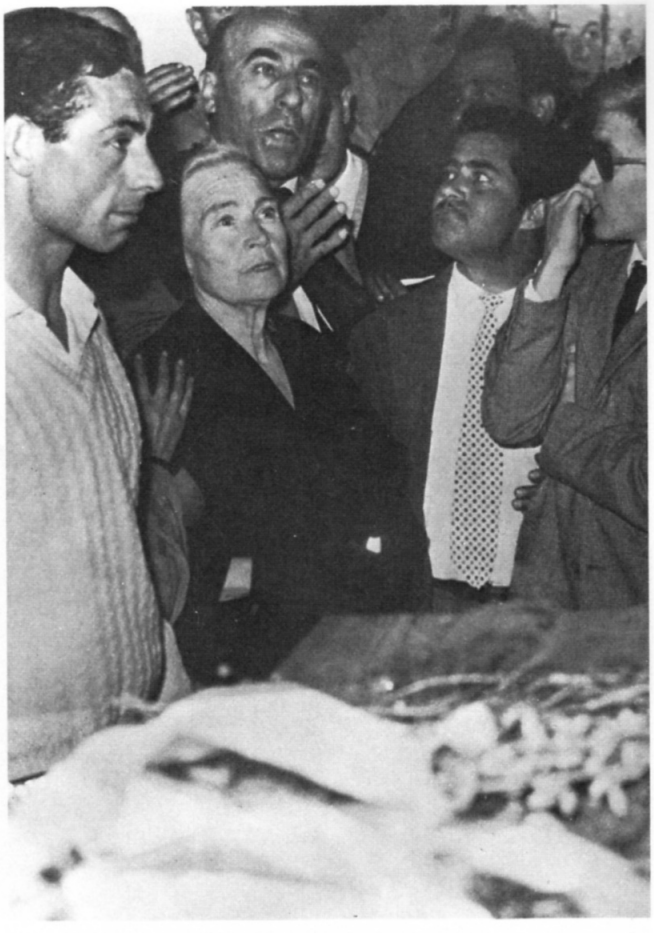
Here, surrounded by the red, white and green national colours, the walls covered with graffiti from his followers, Mussolini lies in the tomb prepared for him by his wife, Donna Rachele, who lives in the next village, San Martino. A visitors' book lies on the table for the faithful to inscibe their feelings, whilst in a small barred room nearby, Mussolini's personal possessions are displayed. In the centre of the town the house where he was born still stands, surrounded by modern villas.

The tale would not be complete without recounting one more story—what happened to the assassins? Aldo Lampredi died in Lubiana, Yugoslavia, on September 9, 1973. Walter Audisio, the man who fired the fatal shots, became a Communist member of the

The Monastery at Pavia. Although we were shown the ground floor room where the body was kept in the building on the right we were not allowed to photograph it.







Above: Police officials and newspapermen photographed together with a monk at the Monastery where the trunk, containing Mussolini's remains, was found (Associated Press). Above right: Mussolini's wife Donna Rachele, at the re-burial on September 1, 1957 (Associated Press). Below: Young men, some in black shirts, stand beside the coffin whilst an unidentified man gives the Fascist salute. Mussolini's picture stands in front of the coffin (Associated Press).

Above: The picture is removed and held by the man on the left while the wooden coffin, covered with the Italian colours, is sealed in the stone sarcophagus (Associated Press). Right: The tomb today photographed by the editor. The picture now hangs on the wall flanked by Mussolini's cap and boots.

Italian Chamber of Deputies. He died a few months after Lampredi. The third member of the group, Michele Moretti, still survives and we decided to try and find him, being the one man able to corroborate exactly what had happened. We knew he still lived near the lakeside somewhere along the fateful road. Exhaustive enquiries finally led us to Tavernola and finally to his flat. On ringing his bell, his wife emerged on a balcony on the second floor shouting 'Non parla ai giornalisti', refusing to open the electric gate.

Until recently, this was the accepted story of the way Mussolini met his death. However, writers, journalists and historians in Italy have always believed that something was being covered up; some fact had been hidden, and the silence of the principal characters and Communist party leaders did nothing to dispel this suspicion.

These suspicions recently came to a head in Italy with an article in Storia magazine and the publication of a new theory by Franco Bandini. We must remember that Audisio went to his grave without disclosing anything, except for saying in 1959 that 'if he wanted, he could tell a few things which would produce a real turmoil in the press'.

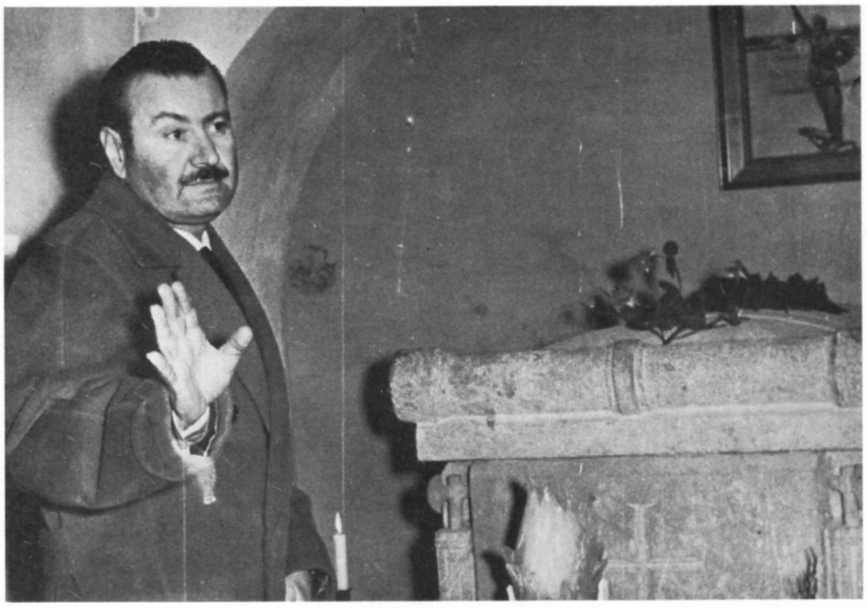
Basically the revelations began with the recent death of a Swiss citizen. Within his will was found a letter in which he told his son that he had witnessed Audisio outside the Villa Belmonte, firing shots into the air, with the bodies of Mussolini and Claretta Petacci lying 'stiff on the ground'. (Audisio mentioned in one of his reports that there was another witness to the execution.) M. Bellini, owner of

the Villa, also said he found no blood on the ground, no bullet holes in the wall, and the Swiss' letter recorded that he saw a fisherman making holes in the side of the gate the following day. Bandini's theory is that a fake execution was held outside the Villa Belmonte by Audisio.

He believes that Lampredi, Moretti, Alfredo Mordini and a Signor X, as yet unidentified, together with four other partisans (one a girl), arrived at the De Maria house at 12.00 midday. Mussolini and Claretta were taken not far away where Mordini shot them with a Czech sub-machine-gun. The bodies were taken away without coats (as seen in the Piazzale Loreto photographs) and Moretti went to Dongo to tell Valerio about the execution. They returned together with two partisans, a man and the girl, who were dressed in the two coats to enact the fake shooting.

Photographs and cine film taken at Dongo were confiscated by Audisio, perhaps because they showed the identity of Signor X.

Mordini wrote a report to Signor X with the promise to keep the secret for fifty years, but he died in 1968 before the time was up. Of the other partisans the girl, Gianna was found



Above: Mussolini's son, Vittorio, visits the tomb on March 16, 1959 (Associated Press). Below: A steady stream of visitors, many of whom, it is obvious, are silent admirers of Mussolini, visit the family vault at Predappio, which is left open to the public. Bottom: Personal possessions of the dictator are displayed in a barred room in the vault.

soon afterwards in the lake at Azzano in mysterious circumstances, Cantoni died cleaning his gun on May 5, 1945, and Frangi died recently.

The French MAS 7.65mm 1938 model submachine-gun which was 'officially' used to shoot Mussolini, number F20830 (quoted in a report written by Audisio after the shooting), is understood to be on display in the War Museum of Liberation in Tirana, the capital of Albania. Albania was, ironically, attacked by Mussolini in 1940.

So there the story must rest—more speculations will undoubtedly be made, more will be written—all remains unproven until Michele Moretti, or any of the other heads of the Communist party in Italy are prepared to speak. A letter to the Italian Communist party in Milan, sent by the editor, remains unanswered.

Below: The flat of the sole survivor of the execution squad, Michele Moretti, at Tavernola.

Above; Campo 10, is the one area not disturbed at Musocco Cemetery since 1945. Here lie 1,008 Fascists executed in the purges at the end of the war. Most of the dates are April 28, 29 and 30, 1945, with many unknown graves. Below: Typical, is the grave of Francesco Barracu shot at Dongo.

Above: The marble cross which once stood beside the gateway of the Villa Belmonte at Mezzegra. Right: The assassination scene from the Italian film 'Mussolini ultimo atto' reproduced from an Italian magazine cover. The shooting has realistically been re-enacted at the Villa Belmonte — Rod Steiger plays the part of Mussolini. Below: The house where Mussolini was born on July 29, 1883 at Predappio. In 1935 a plaque was erected on the wall: 'On this farm Mussolini's peasant ancestors lived and worked'.

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AFTER THE BATTLE

PERSONALITY

ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET

H.R.H. Prince Philip

Our story of the wartime career of Prince Philip, or, to give him his correct title, The First Duke of Edinburgh, His Royal Highness, The Prince Philip, is adapted from his biography 'Philip' by Basil Boothroyd.

The Prince Philip was born at Corfu on June 10, 1921, son of Prince Andrew of Greece. On his father's side he is of Danish descent; Prince Andrew was a younger son of King George I of the Hellenes, son of King Christian IX of Denmark; however, when Prince Philip, renouncing his royal title, became a British subject, it was under his mother's family name, Mountbatten, which she had adopted during the first world war.

His education began in Germany and France and continued in England. From a preparatory school, Cheam, he went to Kurt Hahn's school at Gordonstoun, near Elgin in Scotland (founded at Salem in Germany, it was transferred to Scotland after the Nazis' rise to power). He was popular with his schoolfellows and known as a good sportsman; he was an enthusiast for games and swimming, and was captain of the school's cricket and hockey teams. Mr. Hahn was a progressive schoolmaster, one of whose educational theories was that his boys should take part in the local life of the neighbourhood. Prince Philip was well-known to the townspeople of Elgin and made friends among the local boys, whom he met on the cricket field and on fishing and sailing expeditions; he kept up many of these friendships, and during the war would renew old contacts when on leave in the north.

His love of the sea showed itself early. He was a keen oarsman, and qualified as a Sea Scout. He and his schoolmates built a cutter, and he took part in several sailing trips to the Shetlands, the Hebrides and Norway. He became sufficiently proficient to be allowed—a privilage granted to few—to be in charge of an open boat under sail in the Moray Firth without an adult on board.

Prince Philip was head of his school when he left to become, in May 1939, a Naval cadet, maintaining the tradition of both sides of his family. His grandfathers had served at sea, and his uncles were also in the Navy. His father, an officer in the Greek Army, was the exception.

He was still at the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, when war broke out. At Dartmouth he was awarded the King's Dirk as the best all-round cadet of his term, and the Eardley-Howard-Crockett prize as the best cadet.

At eighteen, he joined the *Ramillies* and served in her from February 20 to April 12, 1940. Greece at this stage was neutral and the Foreign Office was naturally concerned lest a member of the Greek Royal House got himself blown up in a British naval uniform. *Ramillies* was in safe waters, convoying Australian and New Zealand troops to Alexandria, but having got inconveniently near to gunfire in the Mediterranean, Philip was posted. He was sorry to leave the *Ramillies* and news of his posting to the *Kent*, the flagship and crack gunnery ship of the China station, cast a deep gloom amongst the ratings. 'You can imagine the comments', says one of them, looking back. 'We'd already got a barrack routine, matchstick sentries, a change of rig five or six times a day, and an Admiral on the quarterdeck. Now we had to have Royalty.'

Lieutenant Prince Philip serving as second in command of the destroyer Whelp, visited Melbourne, Australia on August 29, 1945 (Associated Press).

They soon found they were getting into a state about nothing, and were the first to admit it. 'I can honestly say'—the same man talking—'that when we first saw this gangling youth, running all over the ship trying to obey instructions from a host of gold braid, smiling and cheerful to everyone, no matter what their rank, he immediately became endeared to us.' Fears were so far dispelled, in fact, that to stand a watch with the dreaded intruder soon became an agreeable exercise: 'We had the pleasure of his company for long periods, and he often rolled and smoked our home-made cigarettes with us.'

An entry in his midshipman's log (officially Admiralty form S.519, Journal for the Use of Junior Officers afloat) later recorded 'We have something to look forward to, there is an enemy raider in the Indian Ocean, and there is just the chance that our tracks will cross.' Both friendly and enemy aircraft were expected and he kept his personal eye well peeled 'knowing the seeming incapability of lookouts ever seeing anything'. They didn't. Instead, the *Kent* hit the Trades on the way to Colombo.

He records that instruction by gunnery officers in running the Air Defence position was an important step forward.

A period in the Colombo shore station *Lanka* was followed by his first sight of action in the *Shropshire*. The entry of Italy into the war on June 10, 1940 (his nineteenth birthday) brought the prospects of battle nearer. The log records again in *Shropshire*, 'We were visited by the Italian air force, but it was frightened away by what appeared to be very inaccurate shooting by *Carlisle*'.

However, with the Italian attack on Greece in October 1940, he was a legitimate combatant and allowed to get nearer the action. On January 3, 1941, Prince Philip joined the *Valiant* and the shooting war. The log records: 'That evening at dusk the Battlefleet put to sea and shortly afterwards we were told we were going to bombard Bardia on the Libyan coast. We arrived off the coast on Thursday morning at dawn. In the dark the flashes of the guns could be seen a long way out to sea. We went to action stations at 0730, and at 0810 the bombardment commenced . . . The whole operation was a very spectacular affair . . . '

There was more spectacle to come. At first, a few days after Bardia, some liveliness off the south of Sicily: and a new name begins to crop up, Suda Bay.

Valiant began convoying troops to Crete. It was a belated reinforcement of that island's defences, though the battle of Crete, when it

came, was over in little more than a week. It was from a blacked-out, embattled Suda that members of the Greek Royal House left in the flying-boat while the King stuck it out to the last moment before making reluctantly for the south and *HMS Decoy*.

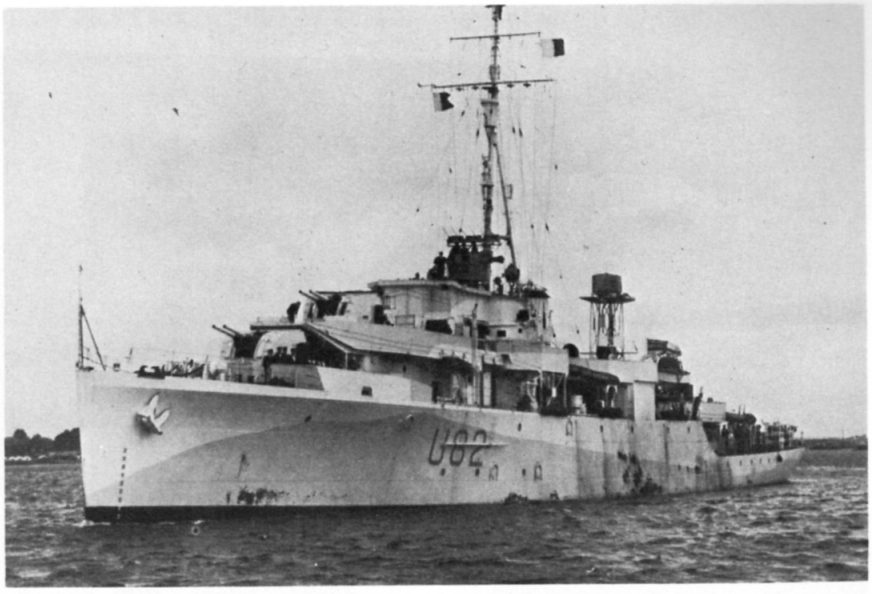
It is often said that Philip, in *Valiant*, was with the escort accompanying *Decoy* to Alexandria. He wasn't, which is tough luck on the dramatically minded. *Valiant* was busy to the north, trying with destroyers and cruiser squadrons to intercept German seaborne landings. Successfully, but at a price. The Journal entry for May 22, the third day of the battle:

'Next day things began to get worse. *Juno* was sunk. *Naiad* and *Carlisle* were hit. A signal came asking for assistance, so we turned and steamed at twenty knots . . . As we came in sight of the straits we saw *Naiad* and *Carlisle* being attacked by bombers. We went right in to within ten miles of Crete and then the bombing started in earnest. Stukas came over but avoided the big ships and went for the crippled cruisers and destroyer screens. *Greyhound* was hit right aft by a large bomb, her stern blew up and she sank about twenty minutes later. *Gloucester* and *Fiji* were sent in to help them . . . Three Me 109s attacked *Warspite* as dive-bombers, and she was hit just where her starboard forrard mounting was . . . When we had got about fifteen miles from the land sixteen Stukas came out and attacked the two cruisers. *Gloucester* was badly hit and sank some hours later. The fleet had then some more attention, and we were bombed from a high level by a large number of small bombs dropped in sticks of twelve or more. One Dornier came straight for us from the port beam and dropped twelve bombs when he was almost overhead. We turned to port and ceased firing, when suddenly the bombs came whistling down, landing very close all down the port side. At dawn action stations on Friday gun flashes were sighted on the starboard bow. We increased speed to investigate, and by the time we were within five miles it was almost daylight. *Bonaventure* signalled that *Southampton* and herself were engaging two enemy destroyers. We could just see one of these destroyers blowing up in a cloud of smoke and spray. The other escaped. Shortly after this the destroyer *Gallant* hit a mine and her bow was blown off, and floated slowly away on the swell . . . At noon two torpedo bombers attacked us, but a quick alteration of course foiled their attempt, and their fish passed down the port side. Shortly after this sixteen German dive-bombers attacked the *Illustrious*. She was hit aft and amidships and fires broke out. Then the bombers concentrated on us and five bombs dropped fairly close . . . '

The record is matter-of-fact. The page headings are laconic. One of them covers quite a bit of ground: 'Dive Bombers. *Illustrious* hit. *Southampton* sunk. Leave'.

The leave was in Athens, where he had 'ample opportunity for studying the campaign in Albania', but was unfortunately not able to visit the front. He stayed, naturally enough, with his royal relations, gathered there in family solidarity before the impending dash for the short-lived safety of Crete, then to Alexandria, then many separate ways . . . except for his mother, Alice, who hung on stubbornly through the German occupation.

Then the *Valiant* sailed to take part in the Battle of Crete. In the smoke and bitter fighting of May 22, 1941 *Valiant* was hit by a big bomb that shook up the ship and all on board. Later, the log continues: 'It was only some time later that I discovered we had been hit twice on the quarterdeck. One bomb exploded just abaft the quarterdeck screen on the port side . . . The other landed within twenty feet of it, just inboard of the guard-rails, blowing a hole into the wardroom laundry . . . There were only four casualties . . . '



Prince Philip was Lieutenant-Commander in command of his own ship HMS Magpie, when she took part in the Mediterranean summer cruise in June 1951. He is pictured, right, at the 2nd Frigate Flotilla Regatta at Skyros, Greece (Camera Press). Below: An extract from Prince Philip's midshipman's log (Copyright).

H.M.S. Valiant. **At** Sea.

DATE

At noon two torpedo bombers attacked us, but a quick alteration of course foiled their attempt and their fish passed down the port side. Shortly after this sixteen German dive-bombers (Ju. 87B.) attacked the Illustrious. She was hit aft and amidships and fires broke out. Then the bombers concentrated on us and five bombs dropped fairly close. A number of splinters fell on the ship but there were no casualties. A terrific barrage was put up by the fleet, but it did not seem to have any effect on these artificially courageous men. The Illustrious remained out of control for about thirty minutes and then managed to regain control and made off towards malta. All her aircraft seeing her trouble all arrived safely in Malta. later in the afternoon the Illustrious and the convoy were subjected to high level bombing but no damage was done. Shortly after this we received another dose from the dive-bombers. Fourteen, this time concentrated on us. All their bombs fell very close and most of them attacks were delivered from right astern. Bomb splinters and machine-gun

As Lieutenant Mountbatten, Prince Philip instructed at the Petty Officers' Training Centre, Royal Arthur at Corsham, Wiltshire. The photograph shows him giving a current affairs talk to a class (Radio Times Hulton Picture Library).

It was during the battle of Matapan, the Greek mainland's most southerly cape, that the incident occurred leading Admiral Cunningham to mention him in despatches. Prince Philip describes the part he played controlling the searchlight section in the following words: 'My orders were that if any ship illuminated a target I was to switch on and illuminate it for the rest of the fleet, so when this ship was lit up by a rather dim light from what I thought was the flagship I switched on our midship light which picked out the enemy cruiser and lit her up as if it were broad daylight. She was only seen complete in the light for a few seconds as the flagship had already opened fire, and as her first broadside landed and hit she was blotted out from just abaft the bridge to right astern. We fired our first broadside about seven seconds after the flagship with very much the same effect. The broadside only consisted of "A" and "B" turrets as the after turrets would not bear.

By now all the secondary armament of both ships had opened fire and the noise was considerable. The Captain and the Gunnery Officer now began shouting from the bridge for the searchlights to train left. The idea that there might have been another ship with the one we had been firing at never entered my head, so it was some few moments before I was persuaded to relinquish the blazing target and search for another one I had no reason to believe was there. However, training to the left, the light picked up another cruiser, ahead of the first one by some three or four cables. As the enemy was so close the light did not illuminate the whole ship but only about three-quarters of it, so I trained left over the whole ship until the bridge structure was in the centre of the beam. The effect was rather like flashing a strong torch on a small model about five yards away . . . She was illuminated in an undamaged condition for a period of about five seconds when our second broadside left the ship, and almost at once she was completely blotted out from stem to stern . . .

When that broadside was fired, owing to the noise of the secondary armament, I did not hear the "ting-ting" from the DCT, the result was that the glasses were rammed into my eyes, and flash almost blinding me. Luckily the searchlight was not affected, so that when I was able to see something again the light was still on target. Four more broadsides were fired at the enemy, and more than seventy per cent of the shells must have hit. The only correction given by the control officer was 'left one degree', as he thought we were hitting a bit far aft.

When the enemy had completely vanished in clouds of smoke and steam we ceased firing and switched the light off.'

It cost the Italians the cruisers, two destroyers and all hope of commanding that sea. Prince Philip was nineteen and not displeased by the recognition. King George of Greece hastened in with an award of his own, the Greek War Cross of Valour. The British, confining commendation to a mention in despatches, were probably sensitive to suspicions of favouritism when it came to decorating princes!

Valiant took a week to patch up. They found another eight-foot hole, narrow but deep, in the starboard torpedo protection bulges amidships. In fact, though the Journal doesn't mention it, Philip was the one who found it. He noticed it when he went ashore at Alexandria: when he came back it had gone: but only because the ship had refuelled and the gash had disappeared below the water line. It was a day or two later that he happened to mention it to the Commander, who said 'What hole?' No one else had seen it before it went out of sight. They spent the next week with a ten degree list while the repair was done.

The ship was still refitting as the tragedy of Crete rushed to its close.

On June 9, he was shipped to England via Port Said, down the east coast of Africa to Durban in a Canadian Pacific liner *Duchess of Atholl,* to sit his examination for Sub-Lieutenant. He came through with four firsts and one second. It meant that he went back to sea in the old destroyer *Wallace* with nine months' seniority out of a possible ten, and when he became her First Lieutenant in October 1942, at the wish of his own Captain, who knew a good thing when he saw one, he was one of the youngest second-in-commands in the Navy. He was twenty-one, and pitchforked into a long, thankless stint of east coast convoy work, shuttling from Rosyth to Sheerness and back, among the bombs and torpedoes.

He was determined that *Wallace* should be run better than any other destroyer in the squadron. There was another first lieutenant with the same idea, Lieutenant Michael Parker, in *Lauderdale,* an intelligent and engaging Australian who had transferred from the Australian to the British Navy in 1938. He was a year older than Philip, and a

custom-made fellow spirit. In *Lauderdale* and *Wallace* they not only competed with each other at sea, for efficiency and smartness (the perpetual battle for paint was fought with many stratagems and wiles), but were continually raising, and playing in, ship's teams for sporting fixtures on land: if it wasn't cricket or hockey or football it might well be bowls: the green outside Sheerness' Royal Fountain Hotel saw famous battles.

In July 1943 he took part in the Sicily landings, when *Wallace* covered the Canadian beachhead; later in 1944 he was appointed First Lieutenant in *HMS Whelp*, one of Britain's newest destroyers, just nearing completion. He sailed in her with the 27th Destroyer Flotilla of the Pacific Fleet, up against the Japanese off Burma and Sumatra, shelling the oilfields of Palembang; they were poised for what promised to be the bloodiest battle, the invasion of Japan, when the bomb fell on Hiroshima.

On September 2, 1945 *Whelp* was in Tokyo Bay, one of the first Allied ships to enter Japanese waters. Another was Admiral Halsey's flagship, *USS Missouri*. Aboard her the Instrument of Surrender was signed.

The *Whelp* was sent off to collect and bring home prisoners of war, before making back to Portsmouth. There *Whelp* was decommissioned, and her First Lieutenant put in charge during the two-month process. In its anticlimactic way, it was his first command. It was 1946. In the summer he had some leave. If he hadn't been invited to spend it at Balmoral the matchmakers might not yet have begun to twitter. Or perhaps they might. They did, anyway.

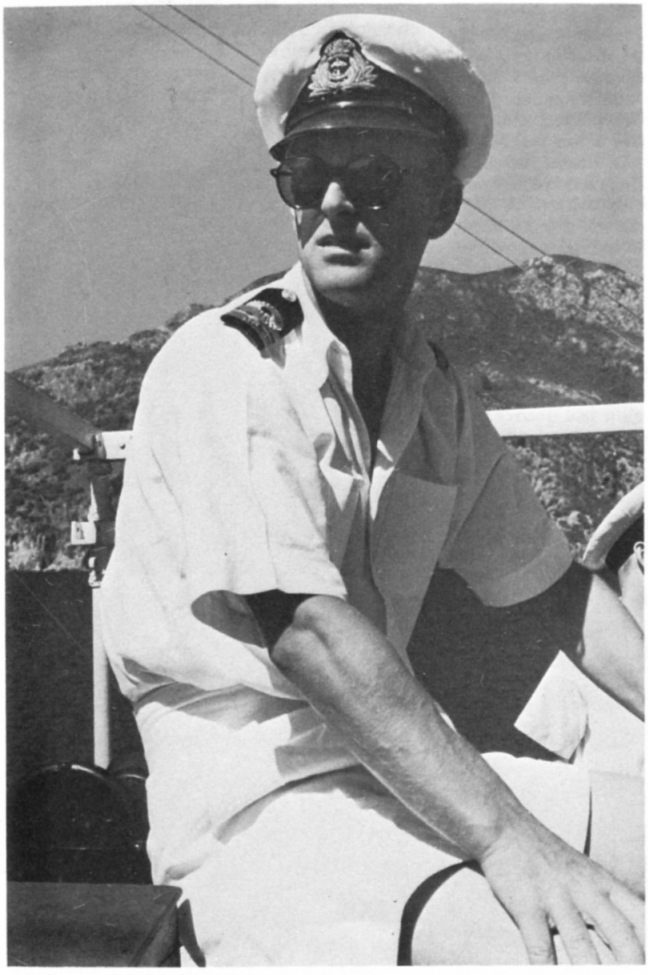
After the war Prince Philip served as an instructor at *HMS Royal Arthur*, a cluster of huts at the back of Corsham, Wiltshire. After being granted British Citizenship in January 1947, and the Royal Wedding in November, he did a nine to six job at an Admiralty desk in the Operations Division: 'I was just a dogsbody, shuffling ships around. It was quite interesting.' But Royal obligations were already eating into his engagement book in opposition to his naval ship-shuffling.

A Staff Course at the Royal Naval College at Greenwich was followed in the autumn of 1949 with a return to sea as First Lieutenant in *HMS Chequers*, leader of the First Mediterranean Destroyer Flotilla based in Malta. Early in 1950 he passed his Command Examination and in July he was promoted to Lieutenant-Commander, in command, at last, of his own ship, the frigate *Magpie*. He commanded her for less than a year when in 1951 he finally quit the Navy on indefinite leave.

His final rank, earned whilst serving in the Royal Navy, was Commander. In 1953, he zoomed up the seniorities and became, at a stroke, Admiral of the Fleet, Field Marshal and Marshal of the Royal Air Force.

Our account cannot end without a final word from Basil Boothroyd. In the biography, he raises an interesting speculation regarding the possible direction Prince Philip's career could have taken. If Kurt Hahn, who was head of the famed Salem School at Baden in Germany (who died at Salem on December 16, 1974, aged 88) had not been jailed by Hitler for his liberal principles he would not have subsequently founded Gordonstoun School in Scotland. So, instead of continuing his education at Gordonstoun, Prince Philip might have finished his schooldays at Salem. If war had come, even without the benefit of Hitler, he could quite easily have served in the German Navy!

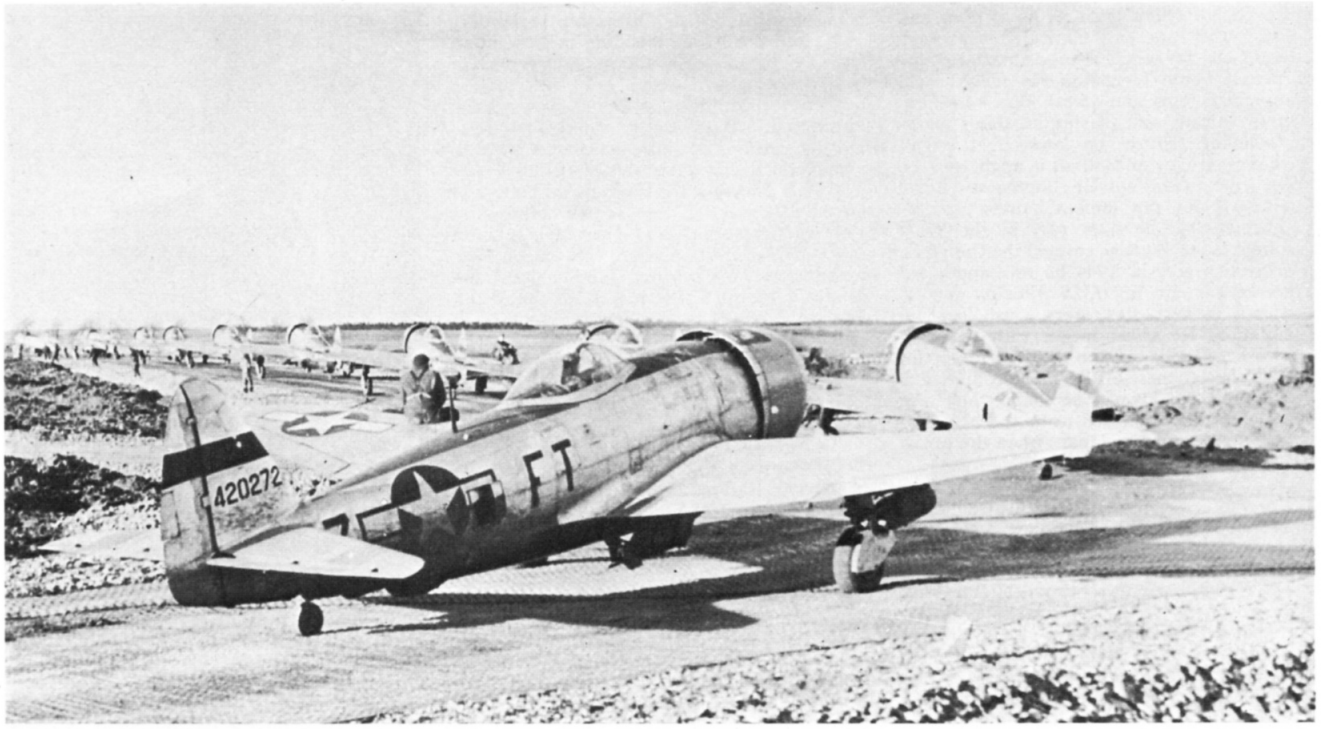
Photographed in the White Drawing Room of Buckingham Palace, in the full dress uniform of Admiral of the Fleet, Prince Philip wears the insignia of the Order of the Garter and the Order of the Thistle and from his collar hangs the badge of the Grand Master of the Order of the British Empire. His mention in despatches oak-leaf is worn on the 1939-45 War Medal (Camera Press).



An informal photograph taken at the Mediterranean regatta at Skyros in June 1951 (Camera Press).

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH
RECORD OF NAVAL SERVICE

Ships	Rank	From	To
Britannia	N. Cadet	1. 5.39	31.12.39
Ramillies (Australia)	Midn.	1. 1.40	11. 5.40
Kent (Indian Ocean)	,,	12. 5.40	3. 8.40
Lanka (Ceylon)	,,	4. 8.40	27. 9.40
Shropshire	,,	28. 9.40	14.12.40
Valiant (Medn.)	,,	15.12.40	20. 6.41
Dryad	,,	21. 6.41	31. 8.41
,,	Act Sub-Lt.	1. 9.41	18.10.41
Excellent	,,	19.10.41	29.11.41
Vernon	,,	30.11.41	21.12.41
Excellent	,,	22.12.41	10. 1.42
Victory IV	Sub-Lt. Seny 1.2.41	11. 1.42	27. 1.42
Cochrane II (Wallace)	Sub-Lt.	28. 1.42	15. 7.42
,,	Lieut.	16. 7.42	26.12.43
President	,,	27.12.43	2. 1.44
Excellent	,,	3. 1.44	23. 1.44
President	,,	24. 1.44	13. 2.44
Calliope (Whelp)	,,	14. 2.44	16. 4.44
(Home Fleet)	,,		
Tyne (Whelp)	,,	17. 4.44	24. 7.44
(Home Fleet)			
Highflyer (Whelp)	,,	25. 7.44	31.12.44
(East Indies)	,,		
Tyne (Whelp)	,,	1. 1.45	30.11.45
(Pacific)	,,		
Victory III (Whelp)	,,	1.12.45	20. 3.46
Victory IV	,,	21. 3.46	3. 6.46
Glendower	,,	4. 6.46	6. 8.46
Victory IV	,,	7. 8.46	15. 9.46
Royal Arthur (Corsham)	,,	16. 9.46	14.12.47
President Apl.	,,	15.12.47	29. 3.48
President I	,,	30. 3.48	18.10.48
St. Angelo (Chequers)	,,	17.10.49	15. 7.50
,,	Lt.-Cdr.	16. 7.50	12. 8.50
Victory	,,	13. 8.50	1. 9.50
Magpie	,,	2. 9.50	12. 8.51
Victory	,,	13. 8.51	7.10.51
Placed on half pay		8.10.51	
Promoted	Cdr.	30. 6.52	
Created	Admiral of the Fleet	15. 1.53	



AFTER THE BATTLE

WRECK RECOVERY

P-47 Thunderbolt recovery

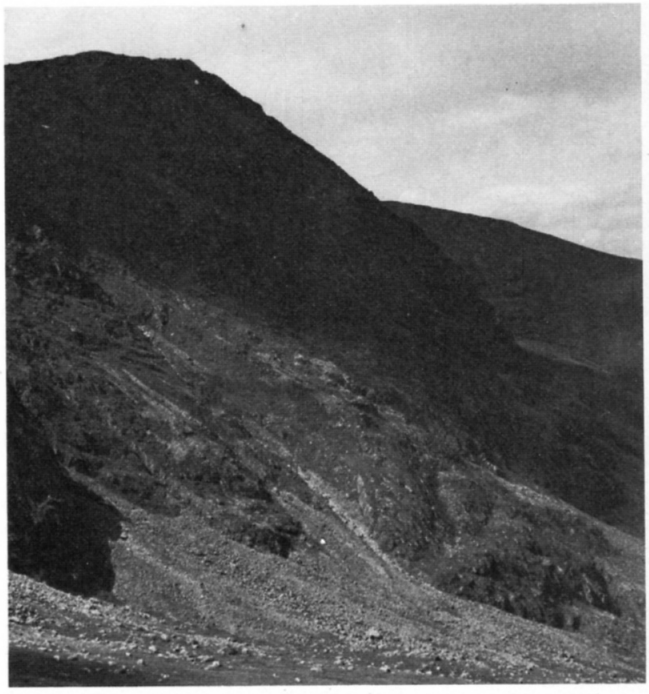
On a grey January day in 1944 a P-47 Thunderbolt on a flight test from the USAAF's Base Air Depot at Burtonwood, Lancashire dived out of the low cloud, glanced off a small hill and exploded in a meadow about 200 yards further on. The reason for the crash was never discovered as the unfortunate pilot baled out too low and was killed in the same field at Saughall Massie in the Wirral Peninsula. Local eye-witnesses recall that the engine was howling as the big fighter came down and that the wreck burned for several hours after the crash. An American salvage unit removed some surface wreckage but the crater containing the engine and other heavy parts was filled in and the area tidied up.

The Pratt and Whitney R-2800 lay in its resting place for 29 years until the Warplane Wreck Investigation Group decided to attempt an excavation as the site was scheduled for possible house building. At this point it should be noted that although the Group knew of the presence of a wreck, the aircraft type was unknown. An unlikely rumour had it that it was a Brewster Buffalo (some passed through Lockheed's at nearby Speke Airpot) but a more informed source suggested a P-51 Mustang. The exact spot was readily identifiable because weeds had grown there in contrast to the meadow grass in the rest of the field, the farmer who owned the land was approached and readily gave permission for a dig when he was satisfied that this was a historical enterprise with no question of the pieces being sold for scrap. In fact we suspect he was pleased to find a group of people eccentric enough to clear his field, unpaid, of bits of metal which occasionally caught in his plough!

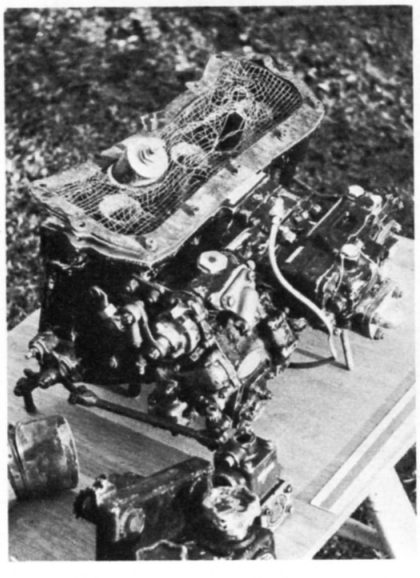
The dig began and immediately aircraft parts of U.S. manufacture were found, but for the moment, nothing positively identifying the type. After a few hours digging the engine was found at a depth of about 4 feet. This was a radial engine so the aircraft obviously was not a Mustang. More soil was removed and the engine was revealed as an 18 cylinder 2 row, pretty obviously from a Thunderbolt. More clues were found; instrument panel parts, rudder pedals, 4 propellor blades, etc. The engine which weighs nearly a ton resisted all efforts at manual retrieval from the hole. Fortunately, a building site just down the road contained a mechanical excavator. A brief consultation with the workmen, a small bribe, and ten minutes later the engine was resting on the back of our lorry. The big engine is in remarkable condition considering the impact it must have suffered and has since been cleaned, revealing that several cylinders are missing. The massive 3-barrel Stromberg carburettor, almost as big as a Mini engine block, has been completely stripped down, cleaned and re-assembled.

Some documents were found in a map case giving the pilot's name and unit, the 20th Ferry Group. Subsequent correspondence with the USAF established that he was a 2nd Lieutenant and is buried at the American Cemetery at Madingley, Cambridge. He was on a routine test flight of an aircraft which had undergone an overhaul and was to be returned to operational service. We hope eventually to persuade the local council to name a road after the pilot if the field is built on, as a form of memorial.

Above: P-47 Thunderbolts. Because of the poor visibility from the cockpit, ground crew often rode on the wing whilst taxiing (IWM). Below: The grave of 2nd Lieutenant Jay F. Simpson at the US Military Cemetery at Cambridge who died January 9, 1944 at Saughill Massie. Bottom: The digging in progress.



Above: The east face of Aran Fawddwy, where the wreckage was scattered. Above right: The rudder and a bent Browning machine gun found amongst the rocks. Below: The engine from the Saughall Massie crash and, bottom photo, the cleaned Stromberg carburettor.



About 30 miles away on the Denbigh Moors in North Wales are the remains of another Thunderbolt which the Group are excavating. This one dived in vertically on 8/7/44 and only a water-filled crater with a prop blade protruding marks the spot. The pilot, a Lieutenant, bailed out and a former member of the R.A.F. Llandwrog Mountain Rescue Team recalls that when they reached the crash there was no sign of him. He was eventually traced to a local village inn where he was drinking with the locals, apparently none the worse for his experience. Last year we drained most of the water from the crater and found that the prop blade is still attached to the engine. We also recovered the breech cover from a 0.5 in. machine gun which had "VM-C" painted on it. These were the aircraft's code letters and served to identify the guns from a particular P-47 when they were removed for servicing by the armourers. This identified the unit as the 495th Fighter Training Group based at Atcham in Shropshire. This organisation was the equivalent of an R.A.F. Operational Training Unit and trained pilots newly arrived from the U.S.A. in gunnery and operational procedures peculiar to the European Theatre. The Group lost quite a few aircraft in Wales and the border hills.

Another P-47 wreck we have investigated in Wales is scattered down the east face of Aran Fawddwy, a 2,970 ft. mountain. This is also an Atcham-based aircraft which crashed in September 1944 killing the pilot. The Thunderbolt was missing for over a week and unluckily had failed to clear the summit ridge by only a few feet. A lot of the wreckage has been covered by a rock fall and the engine is missing, although a prop blade is jammed in a gully on the cliffs. The P-47 was in olive drab and grey camouflage with a cherry red painted rudder. Exploded ammunition dated 1943 is scattered amongst the rocks and the battered remains of a Browning machine gun were recovered. Sections of stainless steel ducting from the fighter's complicated supercharging system still shine brightly amongst the debris.

One other Thunderbolt at Nantwich, Cheshire will be left undisturbed as the pilot's body was never retrieved owing to the great depth at which the wreckage embedded itself. A stone marks the spot with the inscription "Here lies Lt. Brown from New York of the USAAF who crashed in his Thunderbolt January 14 1944." The pilot was killed after steering his crippled machine clear of the town centre before crashing in a field on the outskirts.

D. J. SMITH

Above: The grave of Lieutenant Brown at Nantwich on the edge of the crater made by his crashing aircraft. The crater is now a shallow 20ft. grassed-over depression in the foreground. Only the surface wreckage was removed — the engine and pilot's remains were left owing to the great depth the P-47 went in. A road 'Brown Avenue' has been named in Nantwich in his memory. Note the proximity of the houses in the background.

AFTER THE BATTLE

PRESERVATION

The Keele Air Photo Library

BY A. D. WALTON, M.A.

On the lawns at Royal Air Force Station Benson in Oxfordshire there is a Spitfire. Before it a plaque bears the legend, "This Spitfire P.R. XIX stands at Benson in commemoration of the officers and airmen who served with the photographic reconnaissance units and squadrons of the Royal Air Force 1939-45, remembering particularly those who failed to return".

In an entirely different way another testimony to the work of the same people has survived the years since 1945. It also might be regarded as a memorial whose validity depends on the frequency with which it is consulted and put to work in the continuing service of the nation. It is a collection of vertical reconnaissance aerial photographs taken over what was for long 'Enemy-occupied Europe' with the exception of territory which now belongs to the countries of the Warsaw Pact. The Air-photo Library of 5,500,000 prints is preserved at the University of Keele in Staffordshire. the University is custodian of the collection for the Ministry of Defence and the Public Record Office.

The Air-photo library at Keele consists exclusively of line overlap vertical photography. The earliest cover dates from November 1939 and the initiation of high level, high speed, unarmed reconnaissance flying by the late S. H. Cotton and his young colleagues in the Heston High Level Flight. The two borrowed Spitfires carried the F. 24 camera equipped with a lens of five inches focal length. To be sure, the 5 inches by 5 inches format of the negatives produced small pictures with contact print scales from the operating heights of 30,000 feet of the order of 1:72,000. Even so they were capable of enlargement and yielded valuable information to skilled interpreters. The borrowing of a civilian aerial survey camera with a lens of longer focal length produced an immediate improvement with contact print scales of 1:18,000 from 30,000 feet. Many sorties from these early days are preserved at Keele.

During 1940 the F.52 camera with its larger 9 inches by 7 inches format and a selection of longer focal length lenses became operational. The 36 inch lens, which was to become the standard reconnaissance lens by the following year, produced negative scales of 1:10,000 from 30,000 feet. The detail on such material is better than that on the Ordnance Survey map at six inches to one mile. After its return from France in 1940 the Heston Flight was incorporated in the Royal Air Force becoming the Photographic Reconnaissance Unit or

Below: Alan Walton, Keeper of Aerial Photographs at Keele checks the area covered by a print against the sortie plot with photographer Janet Pass (G. Barber).

THE BENSON PRU SPITFIRE

Spitfire PR.19 PM651 was built during 1945 by Vickers Armstrong at Eastleigh, Southampton. It was delivered to RAF White Waltham on November 27, 1945 and then stored at No. 6 Maintenance Unit (MU).

In January 1951, it was delivered to Gatwick where it underwent renovation up to service standard. This was completed by May 1951 and it was returned to 6MU for storage on May 25, 1951.

On March 15, 1954 it was removed from 6MU and delivered to RAF Woodvale. There it served with the Meteorological Flight before being relegated as a display aircraft on April 15, 1954, following an accident.

It was officially struck off charge on July 16, 1954 and was subsequently displayed at Hucknall and Andover, used in the filming of 'Battle of Britain' and after refurbishing at 71MU Bicester was unveiled as a permanent memorial at Benson.

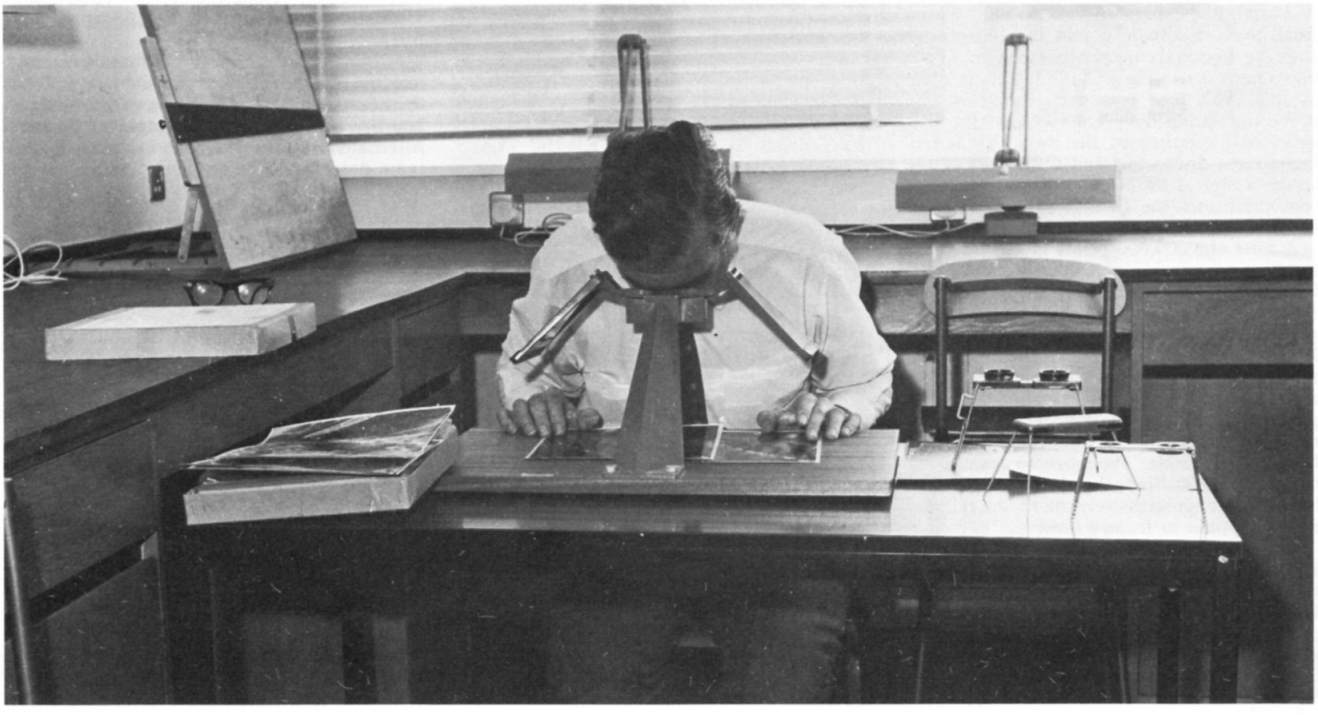
The World War II home of aerial photographic interpretation was situated in this stately home at Medmenham. In 1946, it became and remains today an administrative centre. The house itself is now the officers' mess.

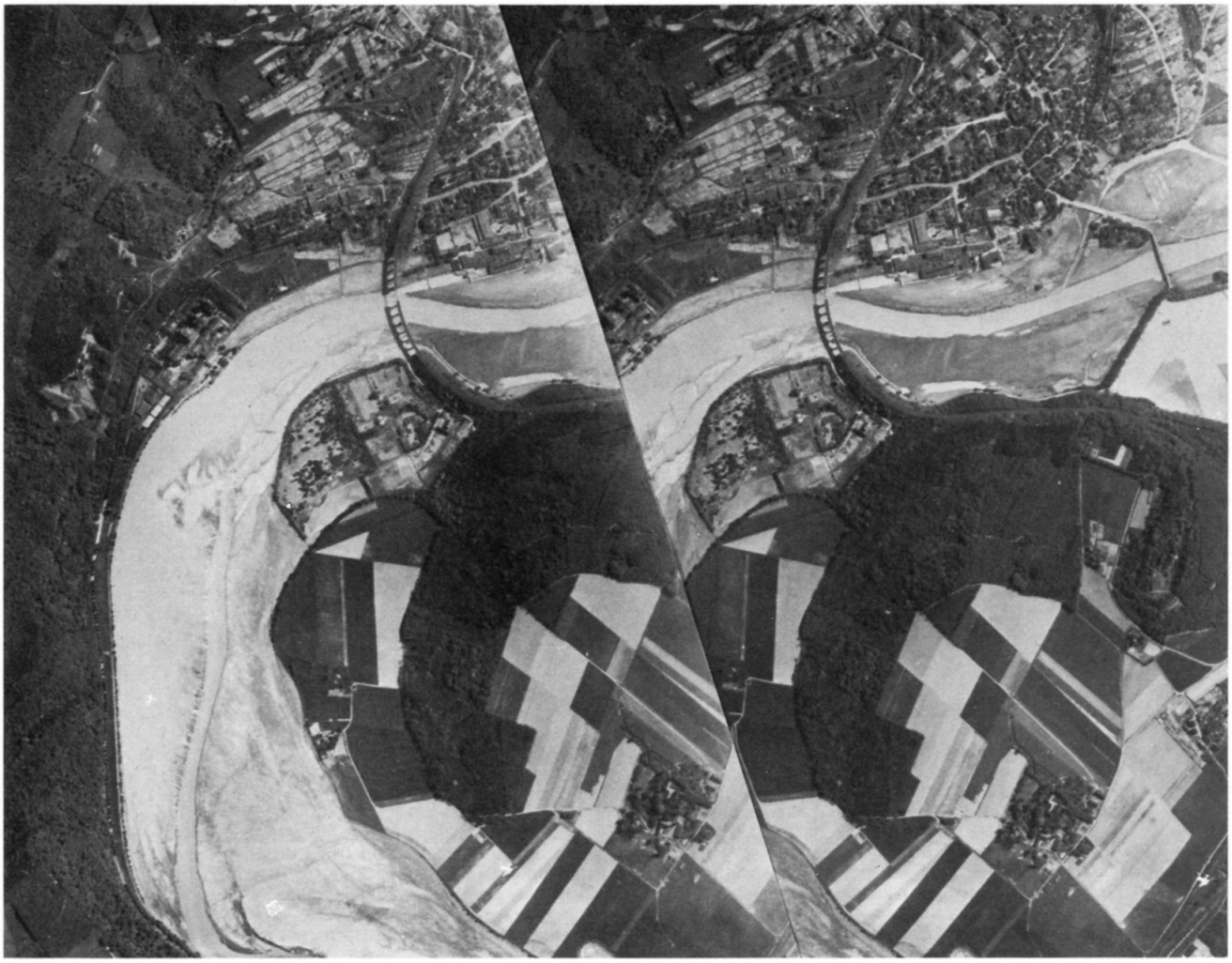
P.R.U. During Christmas 1940 the reconnaissance effort was moved to Benson from Heston. Operating improved marks of Spitfire with modifications and with Mosquito aircraft available from September 1941, the expanded P.R.U. ranged widely over Occupied Europe monitoring all kinds of concentrations, construction, movements and the results of operations by other branches of the Services. The five squadrons which had been developed from No. 1 P.R.U. in October 1942 were organised as No. 106 Wing from July 1943 to April 1944 when they became No. 106 Group, remaining in Coastal Command. The title survived the war until the unit was disbanded to the Central Photographic Establishment in August 1946. It is the work of these formations that constitutes the bulk of the materials at Keele supplemented, of course, by the work of reconnaissance squadrons of the Second Tactical Air Force. There is a good, but by no means complete, selection of high quality cover at scales about 1:15,000 of mainly coastal and island targets in the northern half of the Mediterranean Sea. Cover is patchy inland but line searches of roads and railways relieve the cover of spot sites such as airfields, ports, vital bridges and junctions. The work of SA 60, 680 and 683 squadrons is well represented.

Interest in the Air-photo libraries of reconnaissance materials assembled between 1939 and 1945 and their fate started among professional archaeologists and geographers, many of whom were drafted into photographic interpretation duties during the war, before the end of hostilities. In April 1946 a letter from the President of the Royal Geographical Society and an exhibition of RAF Aerial Photographs in civil and scientific uses at the Society's House were mentioned by Mr. E. H. Keeling in the House of Commons. In reply to his question Mr. Ivor Thomas gave an assurance that Royal Air Force war-time photographs 'were being preserved while the best arrangements for their future use are under review with all concerned.'

The matter rested until the author wrote to the member for Stafford and Stone, the Hon. Hugh C. P. Fraser, M.B.E. on September 5, 1957. The result was a question to the appropriate junior minister. From this move came the long series of discussions with the Air Ministry which were led by Prof. S. H. Beaver of the University of Keele with major contributions from the representatives of the Universities of Aberdeen, Birmingham, Bristol and Cambridge. The library under discussion was that of the former Allied Central Interpretation Unit at RAF Medmenham. Keele had secure accommodation available in a dis-used brick works at Madeley. After settling the main problems of security, international diplomacy, sorting the prints and deciding the fate of the negative backing, the Air Ministry concluded on July 15, 1960 that they 'would be able to let the universities have some proposals soon.' The letter went on to say 'There is, however, no question of their (the prints) destruction, indeed, we realise their value to the universities.' The universities panel decided in favour of keeping the collection as a unit at

Alan Walton uses a mirror-type stereo viewer to examine two overlapping prints to produce a three-dimensional image. Other lens-type viewers are shown — all are available for use by visitors in the library, which can accommodate seven workers at a time. (G. Barber).





Above: An example of overlapping photographs. We have printed these in the original size and scale so that any readers that have stereo viewers can examine them in 3D. Taken by No. 542 Squadron on May 19, 1943 of the railway bridge at Herdecke, they show flood water following the Dams raid, see After the Battle No. 3 (Crown Copyright). Below: The archives as initially installed at the Madely brickworks (Hereward Philips).

Keele and of eliminating the negatives from further discussion.

In 1961 aid was obtained from the University Grants Committee by Prof. Beaver and Keele's Acting Vice-Chancellor, Prof. W. A. C. Stewart, to continue the renting of the secure accommodation at Madeley. In the meantime Sqn. Ldr. A. E. Temple and Cpl. A. A. Plumb had estimated that it would take a small team of airmen a year to prepare and ship the materials from Medmenham. As it happened the transfer was in progress as early as July 1962. The transport, for which the university authorities were very grateful, was generously supplied by the Royal Air Force. Despite the discomfort and difficulties of the severe winter of 1962-3, the flow of materials continued until the final delivery in August 1963.

A total of 5,500,000 prints in 40,000 boxes flown over formerly 'enemy-occupied Europe', from Brest to the Iron Curtain and from the North Cape to Crete in range, were transported and re-housed. This is indeed a Domesday of Europe 1939-45. The final act of acquisition was the move of the whole collection in the Easter vacation 1966 to permanent accommodation in the Department of Geography on the campus of the University of Keele. The move was completed by May 23, 1966. Since that date the collection has become progressively more operational and accessible in its new role.

It is possible for bona-fide research workers and interested members of the public to have access to cover of specified sites and limited areas for inspection and research in the Air-photo Study at Keele. Access is straight forward for cover of Belgium, Denmark, Federal Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. At the present time access to cover of any site in France, Greece, Norway and Yugoslavia is made available only after reference to the diplomatic representatives of the governments concerned. This process usually requires ten days to three weeks. There is no open access to the print and plot stores and no part of the collection may be taken from the building. The contents are subject to the Official Secrets Acts and the Public Records Acts.

Applications for access to cover should be addressed to:— The Keeper of Aerial Photography, Department of Geography, University of Keele, Keele, Staffordshire, ST5 5BG.

The application should contain accurate location of the site by latitude and longitude to the nearest minute and the name of a neighbouring settlement or geographical feature. Alternatively, a marked map extract with the same data would be welcomed as an aid to cover-search. The whole library is catalogued

on a 10 minute 'square' system of latitude and longitude. Where a specific incident is the item of interest the precise date should be submitted together with a span of time within which cover of suitable quality would be acceptable. Accurate information in space and time speeds and facilitates cover-search.

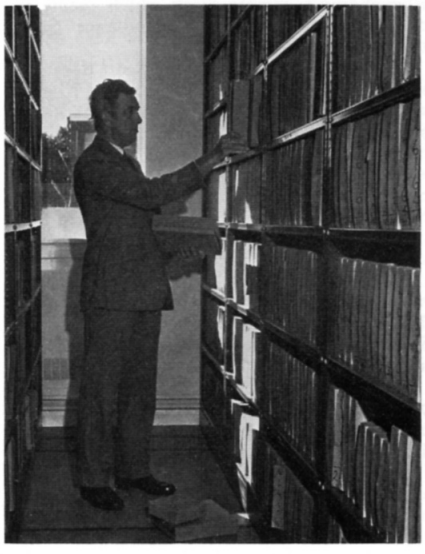
If cover has survived a mutually convenient date can be arranged for a visit to Keele to assess and select cover. If copy prints are required a service is offered by the department's technical wing under the direction of Mr. G. Barber at a price within that charged by the Department of the Environment and the Imperial War Museum for similar sizes and qualities of materials. Prints are reproduced at natural scale. The supply of negatives from existing prints is not permitted. Copy prints are subject to a Ministry of Defence instruction that material supplied to a research worker is for his/her personal use only and not for publication or further distribution. All matters of permission to publish and payment of copyright fees must be taken up directly by the user with:— Ministry of Defence S.4c (Air), Metropole Building, Northumberland Avenue, London, WC2N 5BL.

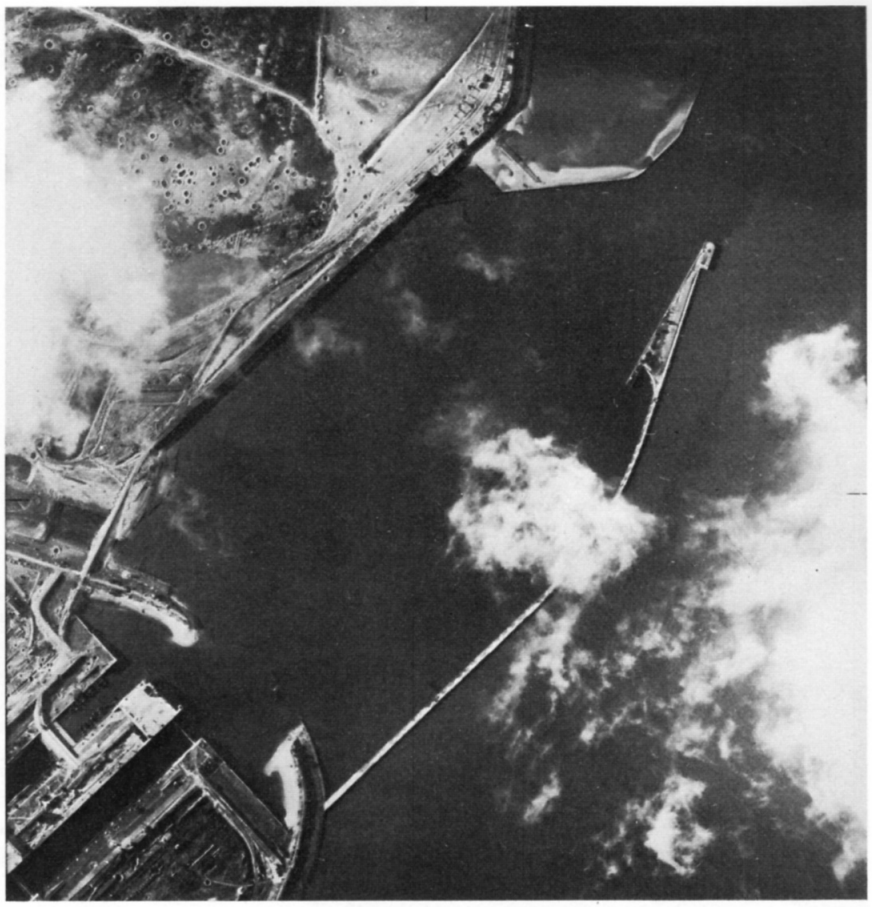
Requests for help at about one hundred per year would suggest that the facility is still under-used. About 2,000 prints over more than 400 separate sites have been supplied in the years 1966-73. The range of clients covers authors, publishers, legal experts, local historians, flying clubs, service and civic archivists as well as archaeologists, geographers and geologists.

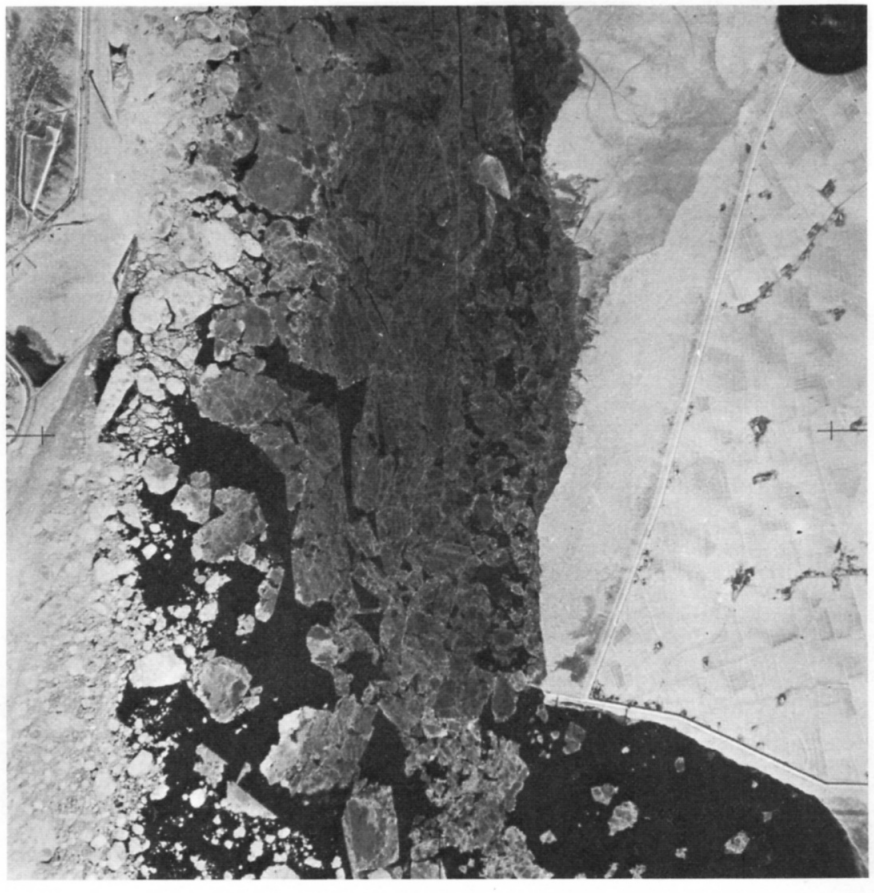
The effort, expense and sacrifices involved in the making of this precise, if incomplete, record of the face of Western Europe as it was thirty years ago and of some of the events which then took place make it a priceless asset which is unique and irreplaceable. Thought of in terms of the work of the reconnaissance squadrons, day in and day out, during World War II, its wider and more intensive use in research and personal interest has far to go in matching their initial endeavours. That many did not return from reconnaissance sorties surely requires that their loss should not be forgotten and the facility used as befits a tribute and memorial of a most practical and living kind.

The editor would like to record here his thanks for the continued assistance received from Mr. Walton and his staff in the supply of aerial prints for the preparation and production of articles for After the Battle.

Alan Walton examines boxes of prints which are stored by sorties in strict numerical sequence. The numbers on the boxes are repeated in a card index and on sortie maps to aid identification.







Typical prints from the collection, both of the same location, Rustringen near Wilhelmshaven. Above, taken by No. 542 Squadron on April 2, 1945 from 27,000 ft. with a focal length of 36 inches, scale 1:9000. Below: Taken by Flight Lieutenant M. V. 'Shorty' Longbottom on February 10, 1940 at 32,000 ft. Focal length 8 inches, scale 1:48,000 (Crown Copyright).

AFTER THE BATTLE

WAR FILMS

PATTON

THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF PATTON

By George J. Mitchell.

PATTON was an in-depth screen portrait of the most controversial and successful commander of World War II.

Filmed by 20th Century-Fox in Dimension 150 at a cost of over £5 million, PATTON is not only superior screen entertainment but is also an exceptionally well-made picture. This was due primarily to the talented people producer Frank McCarthy brought together for the production. For example, there is an unforgettable performance by George C. Scott as Patton; powerful and incisive direction by Franklin J. Schaffner; a definitive screen play by Francis Ford Coppola and Edmund H. North; an inspiring music score by Jerry Goldsmith that makes use of an old Army fife and drum tune at the *leitmotif;* and superb photographic imagery by Director of Photography Fred J. Koenekamp, ASC.

PATTON opens with a prologue before the titles appear. The screen is filled with a giant American flag painted on a background. From the bottom of the frame, a tiny figure emerges and strides purposefully forward until we see the full figure of Patton, resplendent in polished helmet liner and an immaculate, bemedalled battle jacket. There is the brace of ivory-handled pistols that was a Patton trademark. And the confident belligerence that Patton projected.

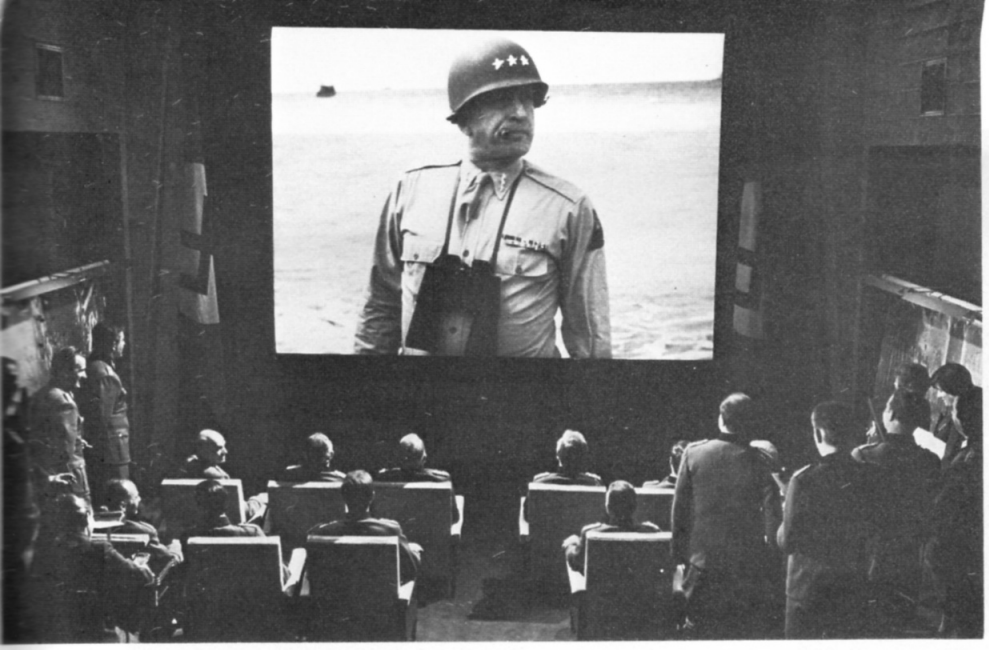
Scott's performance in this scene sets the right note for the picture. What follows is an acting *tour de force.* But one is not conscious that this is just a performance. Instead, one feels that it is real. Scott *is* Patton. This is acting of the highest order.

Fred Koenekamp is enthusiastic about this powerful opening scene and explains how it was filmed: 'This was an approximately five-minute speech. We shot it in one afternoon in the Sevilla Studios in Madrid. The flag was painted on the back of the stage wall with curtains hung on the sides. It was as big as it looked on the screen—*enormous.* Scott did this scene perhaps six or eight times for various reasons, either close-ups or something else, and he never fluffed his lines once. *Never once!* In fact I can't remember him once during the picture fluffing because he didn't remember a line or got confused. He was always right there on the ball just as professional as it was possible to be.'

The sharpness and resolution of the D-150 lenses is amply demonstrated in the prologue. There are screen-filling close-ups of Patton's pistols, his decorations, his West Point ring. The clarity of detail, despite the magnification, is amazing. So, too, is the forcefulness of Koenekamp's camera work which seems to emphasize the striking resemblance Scott had to the real-life Patton.

'Actually, without make-up Scott does not look anything at all like Patton,' said Koenekamp. 'The make-up people did a remarkable job. Scott's hairline was shaved back, white hair pieces were added and they gave him white eyebrows. His nose was built up, but the most unusual thing was the way his teeth had been changed to look like Patton's. I am told that General Patton's teeth were heavily stained as a result of cigar chewing or something else. Caps were made to cover Scott's teeth, giving them this stained appearance. There was a lot of discomfort in all this for Scott, but it is uncanny how much it made him look like Patton.'

Dimension-150 is a photographic and projection system developed several years ago by Dr. Richard Vetter and Carl W. Williams. The optical system they designed includes a 150-degree photographic lens (which closely approximates the normal peripheral field of human vision), separate projection optics and a patented deeply-curved screen. The com-



bined photographic/projector system provides a virtually distortion-free image, and can be adapted to any current theatrical film aspect ratio, including normal 35mm, Cinemascope, and conventional 70mm. The system offers a complete range of photographic lenses which are adaptable to Todd AO-Mitchell 65mm cameras.

Patton's highly emotional nature is shown in the infamous incident where he slapped a soldier he suspected of malingering during the Sicilian campaign. It was an episode that almost finished Patton's career. It is handled with taste and honesty by Scott and Schaffner. And it is one of the relatively few studio-made scenes Koenekamp had to photograph.

In the doghouse because of the slapping incident and awaiting re-assignment in England, Patton gets into trouble again, albeit innocently. At the dedication of a service club near his headquarters, he ad-libs a little speech of the importance of Anglo-American unity. (' . . . since it is the evident destiny of the British and Americans to rule the world, the better we know each other the better job we will do.') He is accused of slighting the Russians—then our wartime allies—and his enemies howl for his dismissal. But General Eisenhower appreciates Patton's soldierly qualities and refuses to allow his enemies to claim his scalp.

'This sequence was filmed in the actual place it happened—a red brick building in Knutsford, England, that was Patton's wartime headquarters,' said Koenekamp.* 'We flew in on a Sunday in beautiful weather. It was overcast the next day when we began shooting. The following day it poured down rain. We finished on Wednesday morning and flew out that afternoon.' Koenekamp brought his crew over from Spain. However, a stand-by British crew was also engaged.

Patton's incredible advance across France, hard on the heels of the fleeing German Wehrmacht, was filmed in the Pamplona region of Basque Spain. 'People have asked me what I did to make the grass look so green,' remarks Koenekamp. 'The answer is nothing. It looks that way because there is a lot of rainfall in that area. It is near the French border and resembles Normandy and Brittany.'

Actually, PATTON was filmed on seventy-one locations in six countries. The bulk of the photography was done in Spain because only the Spanish Army could provide the necessary World War II equipment (acquired by the Spanish Government under the US Military Assistance Programme). Spain also provided a wide variety of landscapes and architecture necessary to simulate the locations of North Africa, Sicily, Italy, France and Germany. Other locations included Morocco where Roman ruins were used and a review of Moroccan troops was filmed and Greece and Sicily where amphibious landing scenes were made. A few scenes — black and white newsreel footage, were photographed in Hollywood at the 20th Century Fox Studio.

PATTON is a photographically interesting picture because of the extensive use that was made of natural locations, especially many of the interiors. These scenes have a very realistic quality and a number of the interiors appear to have been filmed solely with existing light. But lights had to be used on all of them!

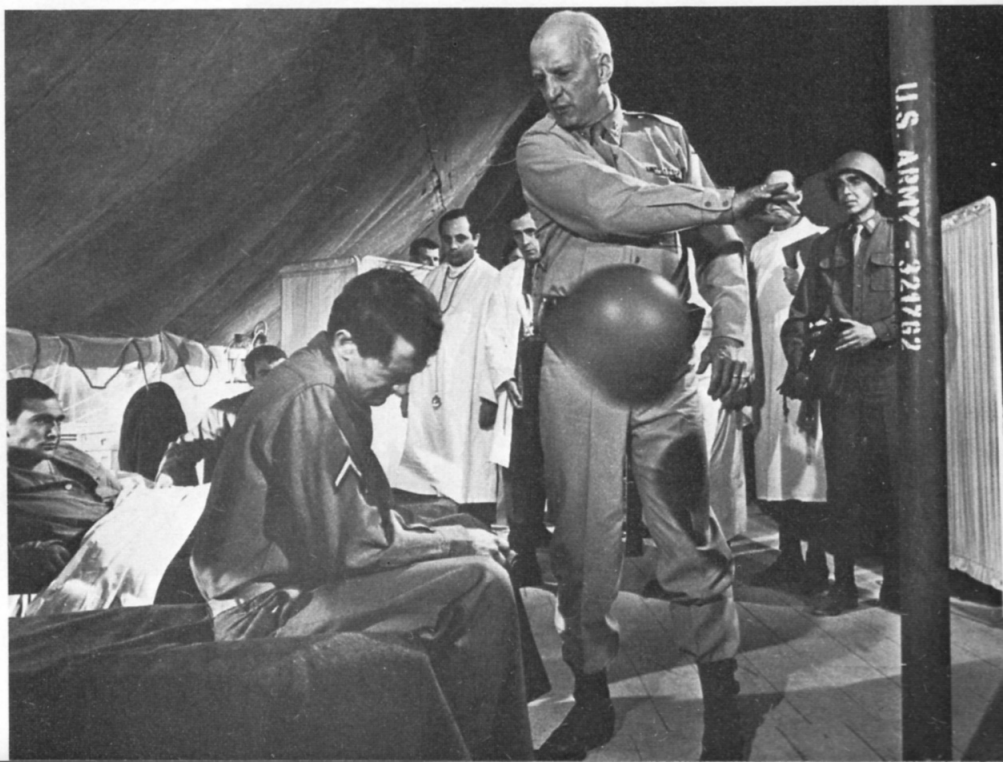
'Roughly eighty per cent of PATTON was filmed in natural locations', said Koenekamp. 'We worked in several buildings, such as La Granha and Rio Frio, that are national shrines. We could do nothing that might mar or deface the premises. Consequently we could not use tape, tack lamps to the walls, put up spreaders or do any of the usual things that help in the lighting. Everything had to be from the floor. In this respect, we made extensive use of "quartz" lights, especially the clusters or banks of uniflood lamps known as FAY globes. We used these lamps in clusters of six, nine and twelve. Of course, we could always replace the FAY bulbs with regular tungsten globes if necessary.'

Koenekamp was fortunate in being able to bring his long-time assistant, Gene Stout, to Spain, but the bulk of the electrical crew was

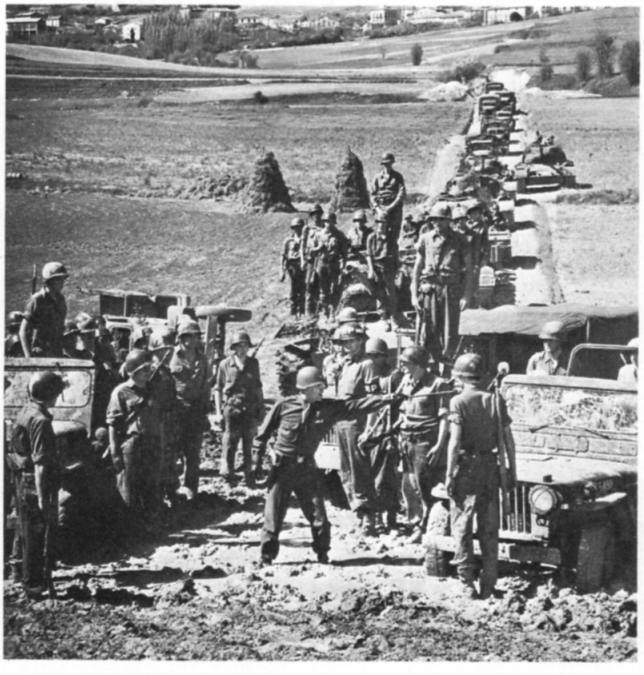
Incorrect. See 'Patton at Knutsford' p. 51. Ed.

Below: George Scott as Patton commanding the US 7th Army is realistically filmed landing in Sicily on July 11, 1943 with vintage cine equipment. Above: Later the Germans capture the film and it is shown to the German High Command.

Below: The so called 'slapping' incident where Patton smacks a soldier in a Sicily Hospital whom he accuses of cowardice. The actual GI concerned, Charles H. Kuhl, who subsequently worked at the Bendix Corporation in America, died in 1971.



Above: The film company appropriately used M47 Patton 2 tanks (produced hurriedly in 1947/8 and used in the Korean war) as German 'heavy' tanks. Here, Patton discusses an attack on the Saar after the night battle in which his tanks ran out of petrol. Below: It was a shame that these Willys MC jeeps (vintage 1951-2) were used so prominently in this scene during the drive to the Seine. Right: A typical pose on the turret of an M41 Walker Bulldog.



Spanish. 'The Spanish crew was really quite excellent,' said Koenekamp. 'They are truly amazing people. If you tell them you want something and it's not immediately available, they will make it even if it means working all night in some foundry or machine shop.'

Koenekamp relied on the banks of FAY lights as daylight fill in some of the more rugged locations where it would have been difficult to haul in the giant arc lamps.

Koenekamp had a full Hollywood camera crew which included Bill Norton, camera operator, and Chuck Arnold, Emilio Calori and Mike Benson, assistant cameramen. These men were backed up by a Spanish crew assigned to man the additional camera equipment. A total of six Todd AO-Mitchell cameras was available.

'We generally used a total of three cameras on most of the scenes,' said Koenekamp. 'Bill Norton, an old-timer in the industry, did an exceptionally fine job with the first camera. We had an excellent Spanish camera operator named Ricardo who handled the second camera. He and one of the Spanish assistant cameramen spoke some English which was a big help. As it turned out I ended up operating the small AP hand camera quite a bit of the time. I prefer to use this camera without the shoulder brace that comes with it. Generally, I would hand-hold the camera on an approaching tank or vehicle and inch it out of the way of the treads as it passed. When you use the 28mm wide-angle lens you can obtain a very effective shot. For example, I used this technique in the scene at the end of the picture when the farm wagon breaks away and races downhill almost hitting Patton. We made many, many hand-held shots with the AP and I'm surprised at the number that were used in the final picture.'

Initially, as production got under way, the zoom lenses were not available and were sorely missed. Several were eventually sent over and were put to good use. 'We missed the zoom very much, especially when we were doing the Ardennes battles. I personally like the 100mm-300mm zoom best because it has a greater range. Zoom lenses are useful for me because you have so many lens positions at your immediate disposal. It isn't that I like to zoom in and out but that I can rack in on a scene quickly.'

The company had a Chapman boom but made very few boom shots. It was extensively used, however, for positioning the camera.

PATTON is a big, complicated picture with many action scenes. Consequently, a second unit headed by Mickey Moore worked very closely under Franklin Schaffner, Clifford Stine, ASC, and Cecelio Paniagua, a Spanish cinematographer, worked under Moore's direction handling the second unit photography. 'The second unit worked alongside us all the way,' explains Koenekamp. 'They filmed the night battle sequence, special stunt work, tanks and vehicles exploding, tanks crashing through walls—things like that. We met in the evening and planned our work together so that we would generally be shooting under the same lighting conditions.'

Weather plays an important part in PATTON.

'When I first met Franklin Schaffner in his office at 20th Century-Fox studio, I had only very quickly read the script. As we discussed the picture, I happened to mention that in war you can't always wait for the weather. You have to take what comes. Because of this, it was my feeling that we should shoot in any kind of weather. Schaffner told me that I had expressed his thoughts exactly.

'We shot in rain, in snow and slush, and in overcast. There were many times when we had light changes in the middle of a scene when the sun would either come out or go behind a cloud. I let it stay that way without any change in the lens. Of course, I had to keep the actors properly lit and looking their best, but, otherwise, that was it! There was only one time during the picture that we waited for the weather. We had begun filming explosions on a distant hillside when it started to rain. So we waited until the next day when we could finish the scene.'

Perhaps the thing that most PATTON crew members will remember longest about the location was how cold Spain was that winter.

'Our very first day's shooting was, I believe, February 2, 1969 in Rio Frio castle just outside Segovia. We were doing the scene where Patton is having his portrait painted when he receives a telephone call from General Bedell Smith telling him he has been relieved of command of the Third Army. It was about lunch-time and Scott asked for a glass of water. A man brought him one and when he got it the water had frozen! This location was one that had to be lit entirely from the floor with quartz lights. These were placed in every conceivable crevice, doorway, corridor and behind furniture.

'The Battle of the Bulge was filmed a few days after this scene, recalls Koenekamp. "It was staged in the Segovia highlands eighty miles northwest of Madrid on terrain that is quite like the Ardennes. We had to wait several days for the snow but it soon came and with it more cold weather. We had on every piece of clothing we could get on our bodies but by noon we were all shaking with the cold. Franklin Schaffner always had a cigar in his mouth. By afternoon, he was so cold that the cigar was shaking.' No fog or effects filters were used on these scenes because it was not necessary. The cameras had all been winterized so they did not mind the cold.

The Battle of El Guettar, a large-scale

M41 Walker Bulldog tanks in the 'entry into Messina' scene: Monty exits right in the Humber staff car.

Above: General Montgomery greets Patton at Messina with the words 'Don't smile, Patton, I won't kiss you'. Above left: Patton takes Palermo and enters the town.

battle sequence, was filmed in one day in the desert country outside Almeria in Southernmost Spain. Over two thousand members of the Spanish Army were outfitted in German and American uniforms, and an impressive collection of vintage tanks and military equipment was assembled with an eye to as much authenticity as possible. Koenekamp feels that a great deal of credit for the mechanical effects in this sequence should go to special effects chief Alex Weldon. The explosions, shellfire, and small arms action are spectacular. 'I saw several tanks on one of the stages at Sevilla Studios,' recalls Koenekamp. 'They looked like the real thing but as I got up close to them I discovered they had been made of sheet metal and fibreglass by Weldon and his Spanish crew. He had built them from photographs. They were later blown up in the battle scenes.'

At this point, it should be noted that the special photographic effects were executed with consummate skill at the 20th Century-Fox California studios by Bill Abbott, ASC, and Art Cruickshank, ASC.

'This was the one big battle where the first and second units worked together,' said Koenekamp. 'I was up on the hill with three cameras shooting down into the valley at the advancing German tanks and infantry. The second unit was concealed in the valley catching close-in action with their three cameras.'

In one gripping vignette made from a low angle, a German soldier is knocked down by a Mark IV tank and run over. 'The second unit was responsible for this shot,' says Koenekamp. 'Actually, the man fell down accidentally. He was not a stunt man but a Spanish soldier. Apparently, he stopped to cock his rifle and the tank hit him enough to knock him down. The tank kept going but the treads somehow managed to miss the man by inches. He got a torn jacket and was very lucky.' This shot was made from a pit and is a good example of the excellent material the second unit contributed to PATTON.

PATTON contains a number of shots made with long focus lenses showing tanks, vehicles, soldiers on the march. In several instances, Patton is seen marching among them or in his command car. This feeling of compression is effective. 'Many times you can get a very nice effect with a long lens by staying back,' says Koenekamp. 'It pulls things in together—a different effect. It's not something I want to do often but it can be effective if used properly.'

In one interesting shot, Patton's command column is seen moving over the crest of a hill, in silhouette, against a sunset. 'This shot was made with a 500mm lens. That's why it has a little bit of a fuzzy quality,' explains Koenekamp.

The field of view of the D-150 prime lens is amply demonstrated in a chapel scene where Patton is seen in prayer just prior to the moment when he apologizes to his troops for the slapping incident. This was done in the medieval chapel at La Granda castle. The ceiling is perhaps sixty-five to seventy feet high and is covered with beautiful religious frescoes. The camera points straight up, directly at the ceiling, and very slowly pans over the fresco. 'I used the little AP-65 with the 18mm 150-degree lens for this shot,' says Koenekamp. 'This is the widest lens in the D-150 family so there was a little distortion as we panned, but I think it worked out all right.

On many of the natural interiors, there was often the vexing and difficult problem of balancing sunlight with artificial light. An example of this occurs in the scene following the battle of El Guettar where Patton meets his new aide-de-camp (Paul Stevens) for the first time. As the scene opens, Patton is standing in a vestibule opening out on a small balcony from which the Mediterranean can be seen. He speaks some dialogue with a player and then moves inside the rather dark, sombre Moorish-style room, where he meets the aide, speaks some more dialogue, and then walks down a small stairway and into a corridor.

'We did this scene in the Governor's Palace in Almeria,' said Koenekamp. 'I placed two arc lights in the vestibule to bring Patton into balance with the outside background which was, I think, an f/16 light. This I brought down to f/11 with an 85N3 filter. As the players walk into the room, I covered them with banks of FAY lights. Down the small stairway and along the little corridor, I placed arc lamps covered with blue gels. There was a two-stop change coming through the door and into the dark room. I think I went down from f/11 to f/6.3. To be quite honest, this scene turned out to be more than I figured when I looked at the location. I never intended to use the arc lamps and if I'd had more of the FAY lights, I'd have used them instead. As it was I used everything I had. It took the entire camera crew—the operator, the assistant on the focus and myself on the other side of the camera making the lens change. Since we had

Another M41 tank at Djebel Kouif during the attack by Heinkel III's using Spanish Air Force CASA 2.111-D's with Merlin engines.

two dolly moves and the lens change, it was difficult to time out. I think we must have done it around ten times before it worked. I've learned from bitter experience that a lens change has to be absolutely right or its terrible.' But despite the complexities of this scene, it was done in a morning and by afternoon the company was outside shooting exteriors.

There is a truly beautifully lit interior in a long corridor of windows where Patton exits from Eisenhower's office after having been rebuked for the so-called Knutsford incident. His loyal and faithful orderly (James Edwards) patiently waits for him and a very moving and touching scene is played between them. The hallway is long and flanked on one side by many windows. Sunlight streams through them making interesting patterns of light on the polished floor. The walls and ceilings are a soft pastel colour and there are beautiful mirrors on one wall.

'This scene was done in the tapestry room at La Granda castle', comments Koenekamp. 'This great hallway is over one hundred feet long with a ceiling clearance of fifteen feet. We waited until the sun struck the windows at just the right angle, throwing patterns of light on the floor. Four arc lamps were used. Two were pulled down to full spot and directed at the far wall. The other two were at flood so the foreground was covered. Nets were placed in front of these two arcs since the actors moved close to the camera. The long shot was done with the 28mm lens. For the close-ups, I used FAY lights and a two-inch lens. This scene was shot entirely for daylight balance. No filters were placed over the windows nor did we use any arcs outside them.' This scene seems to be illuminated solely by the sunlight coming in through the windows—a testament to the skill of the Director of Photography and his crew. Koenekamp is understandably proud of this scene.

Two other interesting natural interiors were filmed inside an old Spanish fort located in the centre of Madrid. The buildings had been condemned and were virtually falling apart. This latter point worked to the advantage of the company in one instance by providing a strikingly dramatic set.

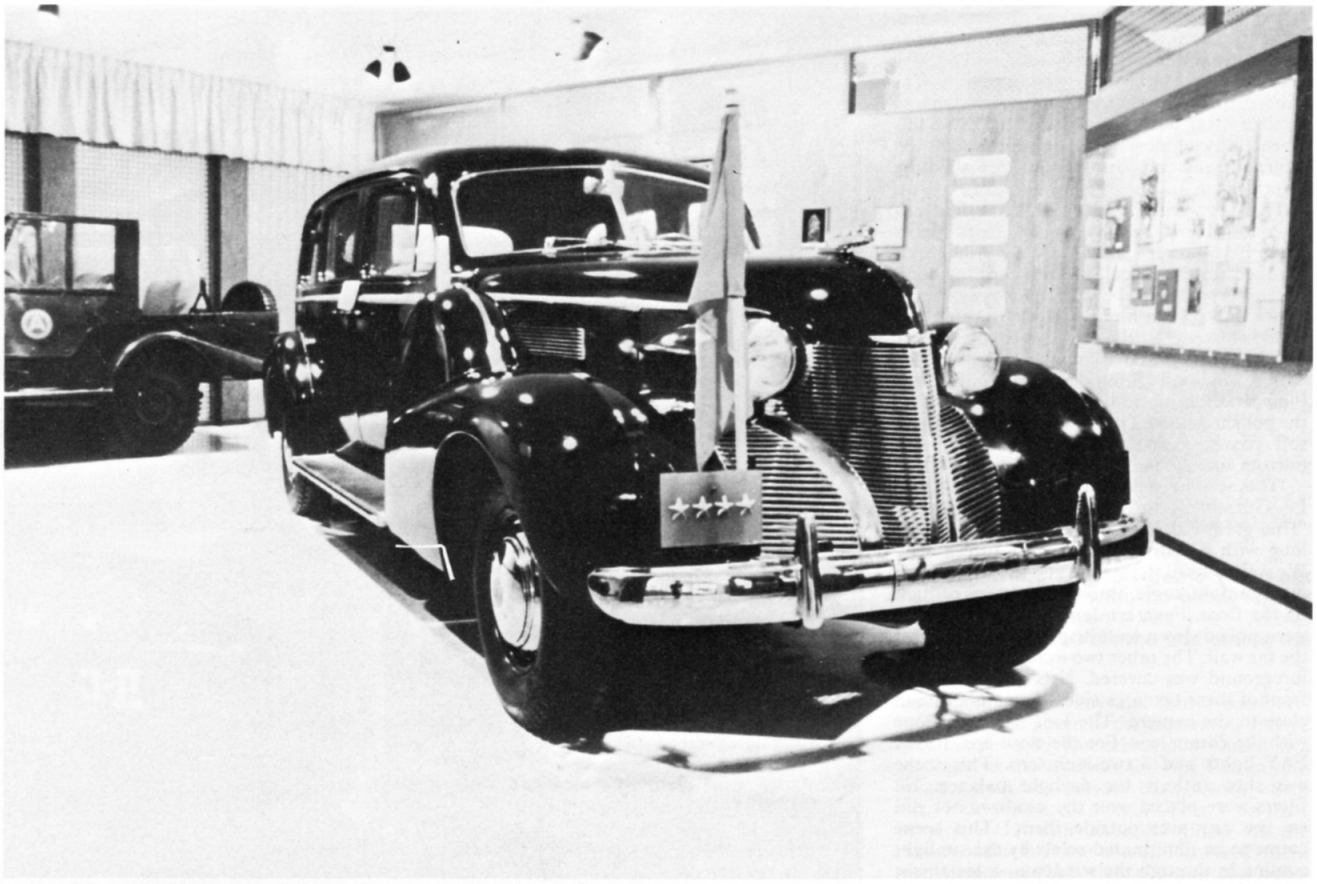
While the Battle of the Bulge rages, all of the Allied commanders—including Patton and Bradley—are assembled for a conference at Verdun. This was staged in a barren and bleak room of the old fort. There are white-washed walls. Soft winter light comes through a number of windows that can be observed in the background. Once more Koenekamp used daylight balance. 'I used arc lamps to match the exterior light coming in through the many windows,' explains Koenekamp. 'It was an overcast day and after we went to work it started to rain so no correction was needed on the windows. It was supposed to be a cold, sombre scene, so again the weather worked for us.'

The riding academy of the old fortress provided the setting for the press conference where Patton made the verbal 'faux pas' that cost him command of the Third Army. A shaft of sunlight streams in through a skylight and strikes Patton, seen riding a beautiful white horse, like a giant spotlight. Around him stand the eager newsmen firing their questions. To capture this episode, Koenekamp once more went the daylight route, leaning heavily on arc lamps and FAY lights. 'We were incredibly lucky when that beam of sunlight came through the window and on to Patton,' says Koenekamp. 'Once again the weather worked to our advantage.'

At the height of the Ardennes counter-offensive, there is a moment in Patton's head-quarters when he asks an Army Chaplain to pray for clear weather so Allied planes can attack the Germans. This scene was done in low-key with dramatic shadows playing on to the dark wall of what seemed to be an old wine cellar. 'The floor had collapsed in this room and a little gangway had been built over the hole,' says Koenekamp. 'You could never build a set to equal this place. That's exactly the way it looked and we left it that way. This scene was done with tungsten balance because I could control the light. The windows were covered . We used our 10K lamps and smaller units which made it a hundred times easier.'

Above: Patton surveys a Roman battlefield outside Djebel Kouif where he explains that the Carthaginians were attacked by Roman legions nearly 2,000 years before. Below: The realistically staged battle of El Guettar in Tunisia where the US II Corps fought the 10th Panzer Division.

PATTON is a film with several hauntingly beautiful moments. My favourite is a sombrely photographed scene at a military cemetery in North Africa where Patton and his young aide (Morgan Paull) speak of the dead soldiers who lie there. 'It's lonely out here,' Patton remarks. 'And cold,' replies the younger man who will soon die in battle. Patton walks to the edge of the desert and stands there thoughtfully looking towards the enemy lines in the half-light of a leaden, foreboding sky. It is a scene played entirely as a long shot and it is poignant and tender. To me, it reveals the compassion and warmth of the director, Franklin Schaffner. I can think of no greater compliment than to say that his work in this film is in the finest tradition of the great John Ford.



AFTER THE BATTLE

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Patton's vehicles

General Patton used many vehicles during his WWII army career. Both the Patton Museum of Cavalry and Armour at Fort Knox, Kentucky, and the Quartermaster Centre at Fort Lee, Virginia, have vehicles on display which were used by him.

At Fort Knox, the last jeep issued to and used by General Patton is on display. It was delivered to Army Ordnance on March 21, 1945 and modified by them to the General's specifications by adding special front wings, doors and cushioned seats. It has been on display at the museum since it opened on May 30, 1949.

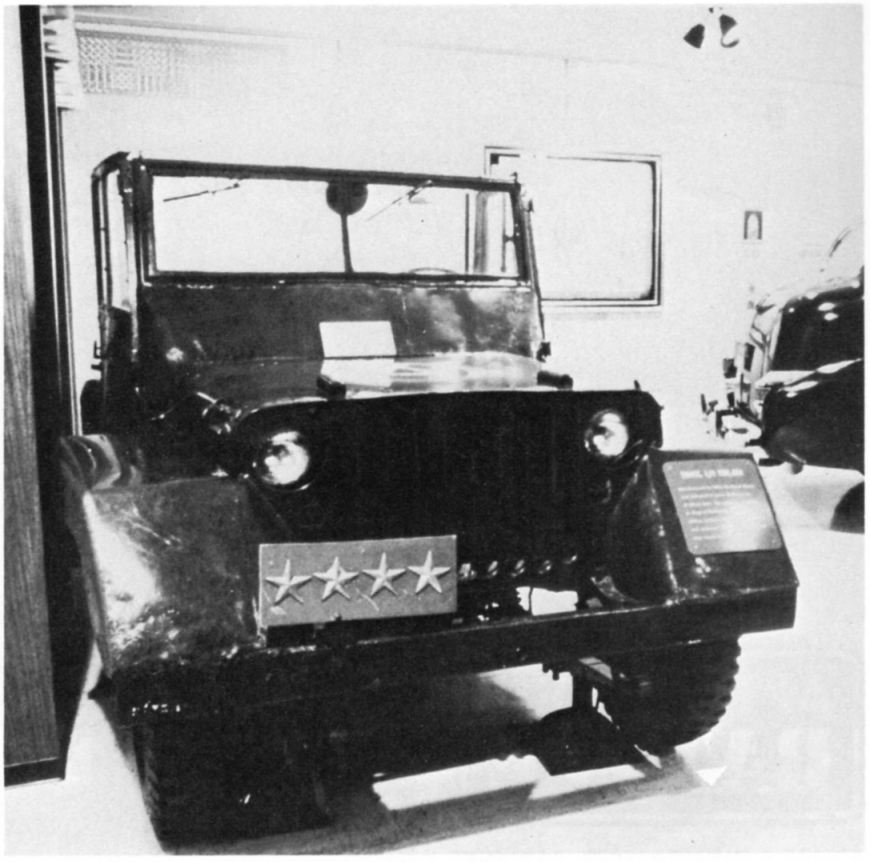
Here also is the 1939 French-assembled Cadillac in which he was riding when he sustained the injury which brought about his death. After the accident the car was repaired and returned to government service. It was used until the late 40s when it was retired and put on display for the opening of the museum. The speedometer reads in kilometers rather than miles. Also on display is the General's command van.

Probably the more well known of General Patton's vehicles is the jeep currently on show at the Fort Lee Quartermaster Museum. It was manufactured by Ford on July 22, 1944 and was modified by fixing the windscreen and adding armour plating, raising the roof allowing more headroom, upholstering the seats (except the driver's) and fitting a pair of

Top: The 1939 Cadillac saloon at the Patton Museum at Fort Knox in which he sustained his fatal accident. Above: General Patton dismounts from one of his jeeps, note plastic side screen (Patton Museum).

brass air horns on the bonnet blown from an air tank behind the front bumper. The front wings on this jeep were also modified and flag brackets were added displaying the 3rd US Army formation sign.

At the end of the war the vehicle was returned to the Richmond Quartermaster Depot and as it had been issued by the Quartermaster Corps, was brought to the Quartermaster Museum as an item of historical property.



Above: Patton leaves his command van, also on display at Fort Knox and, photo right, the last jeep used by General Patton (Patton Museum). Below: The specially converted jeep preserved at the Fort Lee Quartermaster Museum (QM Museum).

AFTER THE BATTLE

IT HAPPENED HERE

The death of George S. Patton

On October 2, 1945, General George S. Patton was transferred to command the 15th US 'historians' army. On December 9 he embarked on his final journey, described here by Ladislas Farago in *Patton—Ordeal and Triumph*'.

It was a Sunday and Patton planned to spend it bird hunting around Speyer in the Rheinish Palatinate, where the woods were rich with pheasants. It was 11.45 a.m. He was riding south on Highway 38, the Frankfurt-Mannheim road, with Major-General Hobart R. Gay, still his Chief of Staff, in a 1939 French-assembled Cadillac driven by Private First Class Horace L. Woodring, a twenty-three-year-old soldier attached to Patton's paper army. A sergeant named Joe Spruce following in a jeep.

Passing through the northern outskirts of Mannheim, crossing a maze of railway tracks, Woodring slowed the car to ten miles, then accelerated again on the open road, cruising at about thirty miles an hour. Traffic was relatively light. The weather was crisp.

On leaving the tracks, Sergeant Spruce passed the sedan to lead the way. He spotted a big truck coming up on the other lane at a speed of about fifteen miles, apparently slowing down as it was approaching a driveway on the left side of the road.

Patton was carefree and genial, chatting easily with Gay, his curious little eyes darting from left to right as he surveyed the countryside. The litter of the recent war was piled high everywhere. It was now 11.48 a.m. The sedan was passing through a canyon of junk. Pointing to the right bank of the road, Patton said to Gay:

'How awful war is! Look at all those derelict vehicles, Hap!' Then he turned in the other direction, exclaiming, 'And look at that heap of rubbish!'

Reacting automatically, Woodring also looked away from the road. Just then, T/5 Robert L. Thompson, the driver of the truck, who was alone in its cab, signalled that he was about to turn left, and took his vehicle at a ninety-degree angle across the road. He was making for the half-hidden driveway leading to a roadside camp of his Quartermaster Corps unit.

Woodring had his eyes back on the road again. But it was too late. As the big truck seemed to bear down on him. Woodring jammed down the brake and swerved sharply, as did Thompson, but they could not avoid a collision. The sedan crashed into the truck's tank and had its front smashed in, yet it still appeared to be a minor accident. Gay, Woodring and Thompson were shaken up a bit but were otherwise unhurt.

It was different with Patton. Riding on the right-hand side of the back seat, he was thrown forward and was then hurled back, falling limply into General Gay's arms with his head to the left. He was bleeding profusely from cuts in his forehead and scalp, but was sitting up and was fully conscious. He was the

Top: General Patton inspecting his 3rd Army troops driving across the Seine (IWM). Above: The route taken by General Patton on December 9, 1945. Kaifertalstrasse where the level crossing used to be — the road is now diverted to the right. Below: The view of the road as it continues on the far side of the railway line. The entrance to the QM depot is just past the second parked lorry.

first to speak. 'Are you hurt?' he asked Gay.

'No, not a bit, sir,' Gay said. 'Are you, General?'

'I think I'm paralysed,' Patton said. 'I'm having trouble in breathing. Work my fingers for me, Hap.'

Gay tried it several times, until Patton said again, 'Go ahead, Hap, work my fingers.'

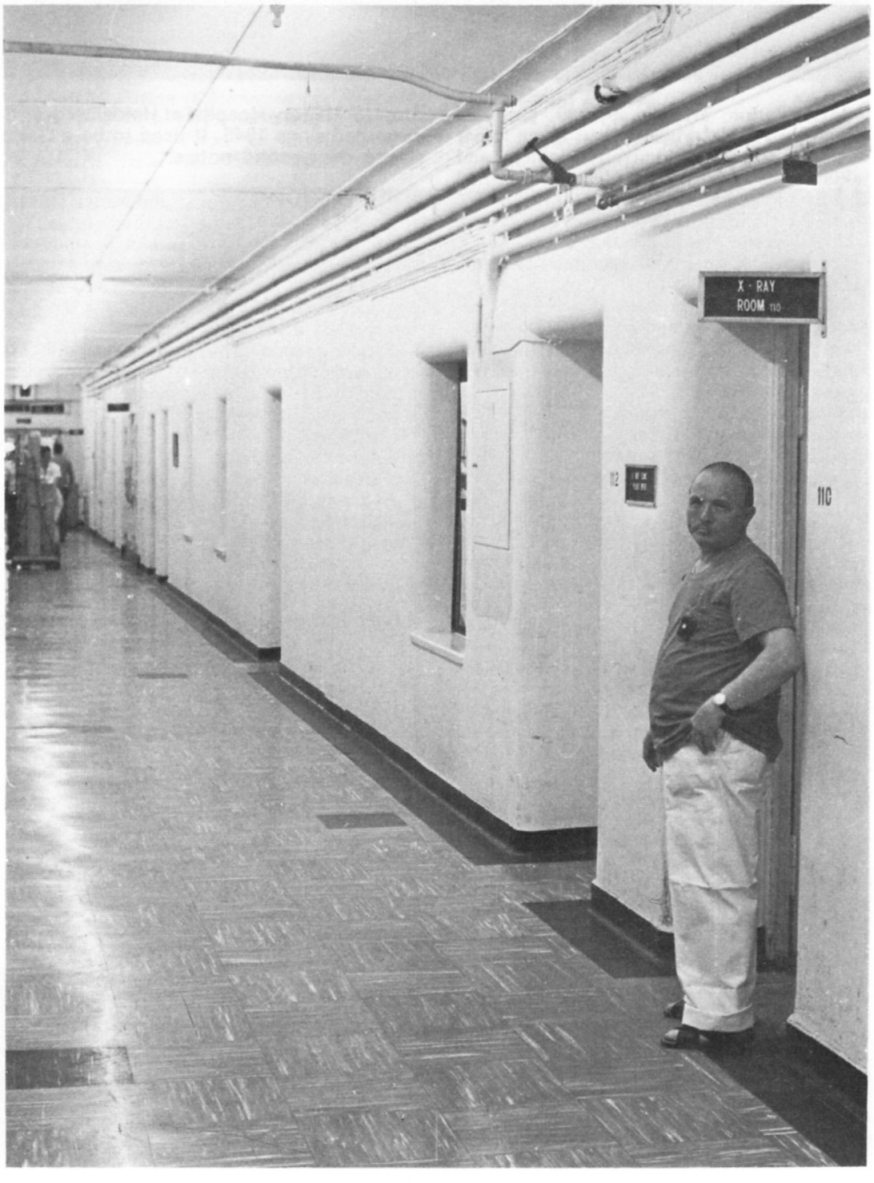
Gay now merely said, 'I don't think it's advisable to move you, General.'

A unit of the 8081st Military Police Company commanded by Lieutenant Peter Babalas arrived on the scene and Patton was driven to the 130th Station Hospital at Heidelberg, in the zone of the Seventh Army which was now commanded by General Geoffrey Keyes, his old friend and companion in arms. It was a small hospital the Germans had set up in a cavalry barracks towards the end of the war and which the Americans took over. Its medical staff was headed by Colonel Lawrence C. Ball. He had been advised of Patton's coming and was waiting downstairs with Lieutenant-Colonel Paul S. Hill, the chief surgeon. Obviously in shock but lucid, Patton merely said, 'My neck hurts,' as he was taken to surgery.

News of the accident had been flashed to Frankfurt, and Major-General Albert W. Kenner, Patton's Medical Officer in the Western Task Force, now the Theatre Surgeon, arrived within hours to take charge. Then flying in from London, Brigadier Hugh Cairns, famed professor of neuro-surgery at Oxford, joined the doctors. Before too long, X-ray pictures gave them the definite clues they needed for their diagnosis.

'Fracture simple, third cervical vertebrae,' it read, 'with posterior dislocation of fourth cervical. Complete paralysis below level of third cervical. Condition critical, prognosis guarded.'

In the layman's language this meant that Patton had broken his neck and was paralysed from the neck down.



Top: The German Ford Capri is on the exact spot where the accident happened and facing the same way. The lorry was proceeding towards us, intending to turn left into the half-concealed depot entrance on the right. Right: After the accident, Patton was taken to the 130th Station Hospital at Heidelberg where he occupied the room now marked 'X-Ray Room 110'.

The US Military Hospital at Heidelberg is still the 130th Station Hospital, although greatly extended since 1945. It used to be a German cavalry barracks. The X-Ray room is opposite the second notice.

Mrs. Patton arrived at 3.30 p.m. on December 11, and when she was taken to her husband, she found him resting quietly and taking some nourishment. His condition had slightly improved. His temperature was 100, pulse 70, respiration 22. He greeted his wife with a grateful smile, but told her:

'I am afraid, Bea, this may be the last time we see each other.'

By the 13th Patton had shown such improvement that his doctors began to weigh the possibility of flying him to Boston. The 130th was a small hospital, but it was as good as any in Europe, with all the facilities Patton needed, and he was enjoying the best of attention and care. But Mrs. Patton felt, and Colonel Spurling concurred, that hospitalisation closer to home in Beverley Hospital, Massachusetts, would be an added boost to his recovery. As a matter of fact, the doctors expressed guarded optimism as his condition continued to improve, but feared that he might remain paralysed for life.

Up to the afternoon of December 19, Patton had made what the bulletins described as 'very satisfactory progress'. But then, a crisis suddenly developed. He began to experience difficulty in raising the mucus that was accumulating in his bronchial tubes squeezed by fragments of the shattered vertebrae. Simultaneously, the pressure on the spinal cord increased.

At 2 p.m. on the 20th, he had an acute attack of breathlessness and pallor, lasting about an hour. The symptoms convinced Colonel Spurling that Patton had suffered a pulmonary embolism when a blood clot had got loose in his circulation and was pumped by the heart into his lungs, virtually destroying one.

He had a history of embolism—he had two embolisms when he was hospitalized with a broken leg eight years before in Boston—and survived them. This time, however, he had only a slight margin left for what the doctors called such compatibility.

He recovered satisfactorily from the initial shock, but then the symptoms of the embolism multiplied. He filled up with mucus more and more, and had increasing difficulty in raising it. His lungs became wetter and wetter. But he seemed to be bouncing back from hour to hour. The doctors did their best to halt this gradual deterioration of his condition but it was becoming evident that the General was now locked in his biggest battle, his struggle for survival itself.

Patton remained fully conscious all this time, never for a moment lapsing into coma.

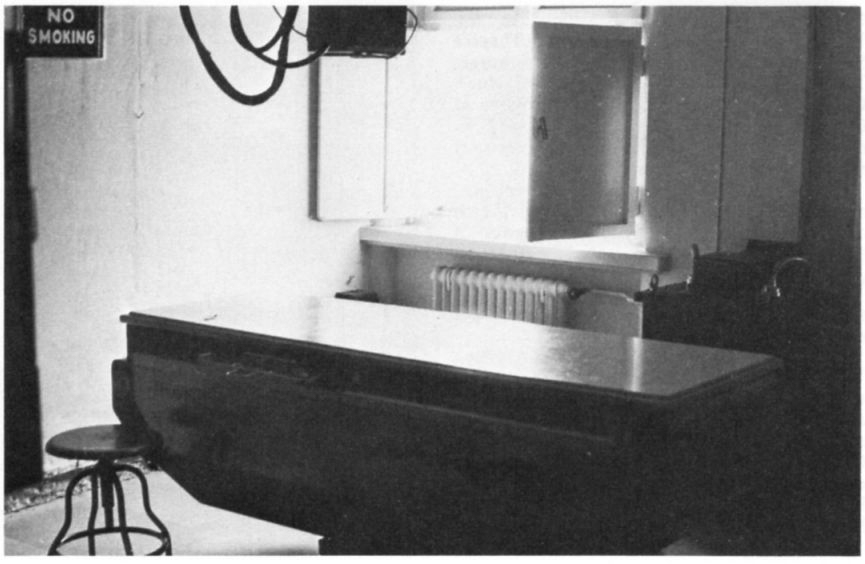
One of Patton's beliefs was that 'the only way for a soldier to die is by the last bullet in the last battle of his final war'. To his brother-in-law he confided that 'This is a hell of a way for a soldier to die!'

At 2 p.m. in the afternoon of December 21 he fell asleep and his wife tiptoed out of the room. At 3 p.m. Colonel Spurling looked in on him. Awake and cheerful, he told Spurling that he was feeling better and was comfortable. Then he fell asleep again. He was breathing heavily but showed no other outward signs that his struggle was nearing the end.

He died at 5.50 p.m. of acute heart failure when another embolism struck his remaining lung at the left side of his chest. 'General Patton Dies Quietly in Sleep', the newspapers headlined the front-page story.

For two days before the funeral, while he was lying in state in the Villa Reiner, one of the stately homes of Heidelberg, the GIs claimed him as one of their own. They came in seemingly endless procession to pay their last respects to the great soldier who, unlike themselves, would not be going home soon, or ever.

The room in which General Patton died, now used for X-rays.



Even in Heidelberg, where the editor visited the Patton Barracks and Army hospital (still the 130th Station Hospital), the exact location where General Patton had his accident is not recorded. However, with the help of an old map of the Mannheim district, the original route of Highway 38, now Bundestrasse 38, could be traced. In about 1960, the level crossing over the railway tracks on Kaifertal-strasse was removed, and the track fenced in when Bundestrasse 38 was diverted west over a flyover about 300 yards away. It is therefore impossible today to drive across the tracks following General Patton's route of December 9, 1945. However, after driving round the diversion, if one continues along Kaifertal-strasse on the far side of the railway line, the open spaces where the derelict vehicles were heaped still remain, one on the right-hand side, then one on the left.

The entrance to the US Quartermaster Corps unit still lies back on the right-hand side of the road. The Americans departed in 1947 and it now houses the Mannheim refuse collection service.

At the 130th Station Hospital, we were given a cordial welcome by the adjutant, and together with Major Simpson, and a letter and a plan sent by Lieutenant-Colonel Hill, the chief surgeon attending General Patton in 1945, we determined the room in which General Patton died. It is now used for X-rays and this revelation caused quite a stir with the young radiographer and her patients.

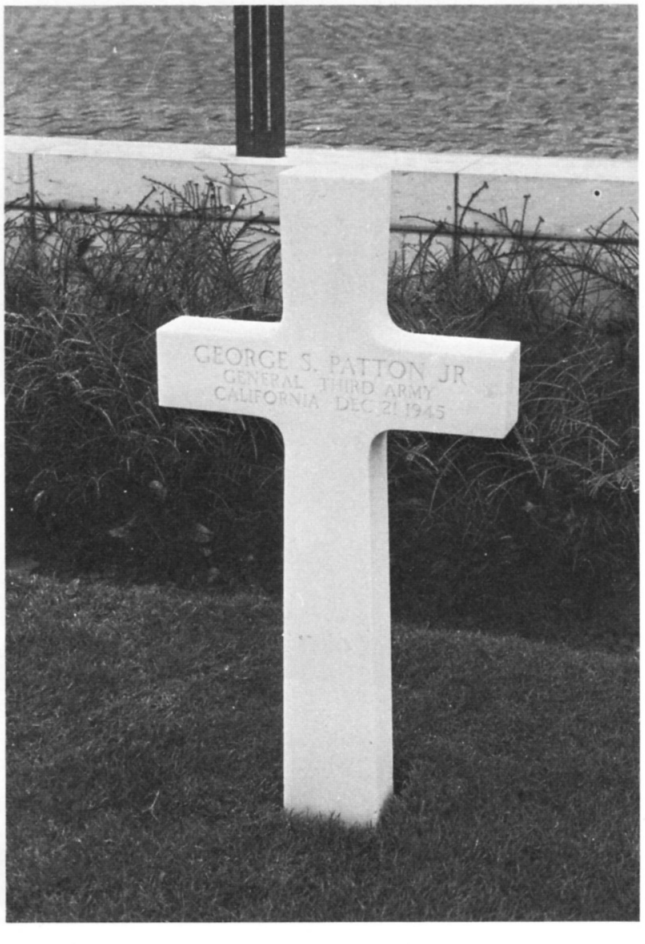
Dr. Hill wrote to us from Maine in the United States to give some further details. The General's body was first removed to one of the brick stalls below the ground floor room in which he died. Dr. Hill and Colonel Ball then covered the body with the American flag. A casket with a plexi-glas cover at one end was flown over from England. Since the body was to be embalmed, Dr. Hill was fortunate in locating a soldier in his former evacuation hospital unit with the necessary ability to accomplish this.

The general's body then lay in state at the Villa Reiner in Heidelberg and a service was held at Christ Church, Heidelberg, on December 23. His burial took place on Christmas Eve, 1945.

General Patton is buried in the American Military Cemetery just outside Luxembourg City at Hamm. There he lies in a grave separated from the 5075 other burials, symbolically, still out in front of many of the men he commanded.

Above: The funeral service in Christ Church, Heidelberg, on December 23, 1945 (Associated Press). Below: The following day he was buried at the US Military Cemetery at Hamm just outside Luxembourg. The negro bearer in front is Master Sergeant William G. Meeks, the General's orderly for eight years (Associated Press).

Above: On May 16, 1954 a monument dedicated to General Patton was unveiled at Ettelbruck, Luxembourg by the Prince of Luxembourg. Patton's son, Captain George S. Patton III, and the Prime Minister of Luxembourg attended the ceremony. Our photograph shows General Leander of the 2nd US Division making his speech (Associated Press). Below left: The statue of Patton near the monument at Ettelbruck. A Sherman tank is also included in the memorial area. Top right: A living memorial in Heidelberg: The Patton Barracks. Below right: The Italian marble cross on his grave at Hamm.



AFTER THE BATTLE

ENGLAND

General Patton at Knutsford

The stormy career of General George Patton was marked with publicity — some good, some bad, some unjustified. In the latter category falls the so called 'Russian insult' which occurred at Knutsford, Cheshire on April 25, 1944.

General Patton was based at Poever Hall, a stately home four miles south of Knutsford, whilst his Third Army troops were camped nearby at Poever and Toft Camps. During this build-up period for the D-Day landings in June, Patton was much in demand at local functions and enjoyed his associations with the local gentry. At the same time, the Knutsford Women's Voluntary Service, led by Mrs. M. Constantine-Smith, was organising a Welcome Club for the American officers whom they felt, unlike the enlisted men, were short of a recreation centre. Accordingly she asked General Patton if he would speak at the opening of the club.

Patton mindful of a recent spate of 'faux-pas', agreed only when assured his remarks would be unofficial and off the record.

However, when he arrived at the British Legion HQ at the Rudkin Rooms in Drury Lane, where the opening ceremony was to take place, he found the press in attendance and he was photographed leaving his car with 'Willie' his bull terrier.

In view of the presence of the newspapermen Mrs. Constantine-Smith, speaking in the large second floor room, emphasised that General Patton was attending in an unofficial capacity and that 'he will be speaking to you in a purely friendly way and nothing he will say must be quoted'.

Replying to the opening speech by Miss

Below: General George S. Patton speaking at the opening meeting of the Knutsford 'Welcome Club', held on the top floor of the Rudkin Rooms in Drury Lane. Mrs. Constantine-Smith is sitting on his immediate right with Miss Foster-Jeffries — on Patton's left is Mr. Johnson, Knutsford Council Chairman. Above: Our picture of Mrs. Constantine-Smith together with Mr. K. L. Wilson of the Knutsford Guardian taken in January 1975 in front of the same window.

Foster Jeffries, Patton ad-libbed a little speech in which he said that 'the idea of these clubs could not be better because undoubtedly it is our destiny to rule the world, we British, American and, of course, Russian people, and the more we know each other the better it will be'.

Although the speech was recorded faultlessly in the British press (as our cuttings indicate), by the time the text reached the United States, the essential reference to our then allies, the Russians, had been omitted. The story hit the headlines there in the next morning's papers.

General Marshall in Washington fired off an angry message to General Eisenhower in response to the outcry in the American press and also Congress about the insult to the Soviet Union. SHAEF Public Relations called Patton's Deputy Chief of Staff, General Gay to find out what the General had said. Angry Congressmen both Democrats and Republicans, criticized Patton on the floor of the house. This time, the molehill of an innocent remark became a mountain of trouble for Patton.

During the next week the uproar escalated and threatened to deprive the Allies of one of their most promising combat leaders. Patton went to see Eisenhower and offered to resign his commission so as to relieve the Supreme Commander of any embarrassment.

Finally, the American Secretary of War, Stimson, intervened on Patton's behalf and Eisenhower himself considered the incident, if there was such, as far too trivial to warrant punishment. On May 3, Eisenhower sent a telegram to Patton advising him of his favourable decision which he followed up with a letter of confirmation.

Despite the exoneration, we are told that the whole incident left General Patton with a deep-seated bitterness that was never to leave him, innocent as he was of any wrongdoing.

This incident was portrayed in the Patton film but unfortunately, perhaps for more dramatic effect, two drastic errors crept in, in spite of claims by the film company's publicity department 'to keep it as true to fact as possible'. To this end they replaced the original 'welcome' banner, which included the town name 'Knutsford', when told by the townspeople that town names and signposts were never seen during the war.

In the scene the actual words of General Patton were again quoted incorrectly and the reference to the Russians omitted. Then the scene was portrayed out-of-doors in front of the old town hall (now a furniture store, Allen and Appleyard) whereas the actual speech took place indoors. It seems the film company, who sent researchers to Knutsford in advance of the film crew, could not trace anyone that knew the correct details; with help from Mr. K. L. Wilson of the Knutsford Guardian, we traced Mrs. Constantine-Smith, now the holder of an OBE for her seven years WVS work in the town, living a few miles from Knutsford at Holmes Chapel. She kindly agreed to return to Knutsford with the editor, to the Ruskin Rooms for the first time since she resigned from the WVS in 1946. There, although the large room has now been partitioned off into separate offices, we were able to reconstruct the scene. Mrs. Constantine-Smith confirmed that General Patton included a reference to the Russians in his speech.

Above: The set is prepared in front of the old town hall in Knutsford (now a furniture store) with the original banner (Knutsford Guardian). Below: George Scott as Patton in the scene as it appeared in the film with the amended banner.

General Patton Opens Welcome Club

General Patton of the U.S. Army spoke at the opening of a Welcome Club for American troops at a North West town on Tuesday night. The club is incorporated with a British Legion headquarters.

The Hon. Mrs. Constantine Smith, presided, and the club was officially opened by Mrs. Foster Jeffries, who said that the idea of a club originated jointly with the M.O.I. and the W.V.S. They were anxious to show the Americans hospitality and a friendly atmosphere in home life.

General Patton said he had been welcoming the Germans and Italians for some time into hell. He had done a lot in that direction and he had got about 177,000 there. He agreed with Bernard Shaw, that the English and American peoples were separated by a common language. (Laughter). They had some difficulty in understanding each other.

The idea of these clubs could not be better, because it was undoubtedly their destiny to rule the world. The more they saw of each other the better. It was a good idea to know that they were nearly the same sort of people.

"The sooner our soldiers write home, and say how lovely the English ladies are, the sooner the American dames get jea and force the war to a succ conclusion," he added.

Councillor F. Johnson, expressed satisfaction at founding of such a club anc T. Blatherwick, J.P., spok the fact that the club wa headqua

Win Soon This Way'

Gen. Pa

IEUT.-GENERAL G PATTON, opening Welcome Club" to U.S. Somewhere in Englar night, said:

"The only welcoming I for some time has been Germans and Italians in have done quite a lot in t and have got about 177,0 He went on: "I agr Bernard Shaw that the American peoples are s common language. The clubs could not be b undoubtedly, it is our the world with the R being so, the more other the better.

"The sooner our home and say how l ladies are the sooner will get jealous and a successful conclu shall have a chanc

THE GENE AND HIS D

GENERAL PATTON, of the U.S. Army, now in this country, photographed by a News Chronicle cameraman yesterday with his dog Willie.

Veteran of the R.A.F., Willie has actually flown over Berlin.

THE TASK OF GEN. PATTON

Sending Germans 'Into Hell'

GENERAL PATTON, opening a "British welcome club" to United States soldiers last night, made his first public speech since his arrival in this country recently to take part in the invasion.

"The only welcoming I have done for some time has been welcoming Germans and Italians into Hell," he said. "I have done quite a lot in that direction and have got about 177,000 there."

"Undoubtedly it is our destiny to rule the world—we British, American, and, of course Russian people. So we must get better acquainted."

He went on: "I agree with Mr. Bernard Shaw that the English and American peoples are separated by a common language. (Laughter.) We certainly have some difficulty in understanding each other. The idea of these clubs could not be better because undoubtedly it is our destiny to rule the world, we British, American, and, of course, Russian people, and the more we know each other the better it will be. (Applause.)

It is very fine for our men to meet English people and to find that in spite of this unjumpable wall of language that we are very nearly the same sort of people. The sooner our soldiers write home and say 'how truly lovely the English ladies are, the more jealous the American dames will become and thus force the war to a successful conclusion. (Laughter and applause.) Then I shall have a chance to go and kill the Japanese." (Loud applause.)

PATTON IN NEW ROW

'Rule the world' speech attacked

Express Staff Reporter

NEW YORK, Wednesday.—General Patton is in trouble with Republican Senators today because he is reported to have said in London that the U.S. and Britain are destined to rule the world.

Senator Harlam Bushfield said: "The general has stepped out of his bounds. This is another barrier to his promotion.

"His job is to carry out military assignments without discussing civilian arrangements."

'LET HULL DO IT'

Other Republicans demanded that statements on foreign policy should be left to Mr Cordell Hull, Secretary of State.

Senator Edwin Johnson (Democrat) said: Such talk is not onl nonsensical, but mischievous."

The New York Sun says Gener Patton "blundered" and has aga demonstrated his unhappy facul for getting himself and others in hot water." His speech is call "the latest essay in imprudence."

A War Department spokesm said the text of Patton's rema received in Washington diffe materially from the speech repo in American newspapers.

According to the text, Gen Patton said: "It is our destin rule the world with Britain, Ru China, and other countries."

The Senate's military a sub-committee recently de action in General Patton's p tion to the permanent ran major-general following his ping of a soldier in Sicily.

WELCOME CLUB OPENED

GENERAL PATTON DEFINES HIS TASK

There was a crowded attendance at a British Legion headquarters somewhere in England on Tuesday evening, for the formal opening of a British Welcome Club to American troops.

It was stated that that type of club had originated jointly in the minds of the Ministry of Information and the W.V.S. They were keenly anxious to show Americans hospitality and also the friendly atmosphere of British home life. Their objective was for the Americans and the British to get together and to ensure that when the peace was won it would be kept for all time. Lasting peace would be won by mutual understanding, and the way to get that was by working and playing together.

GENERAL'S TASK

General Patton said: The only welcoming I have been doing for some time is welcoming Germans and Italians into hell. I have done quite a lot in that direction, and I have got about 177,000 there. (Applause.) I agree with Mr. Bernard Shaw that the English and American peoples are separated by a common language. (Laughter.) We certainly have some difficulty in understanding each other. The idea of these clubs could not b better because undoubtedly it is our destiny to rule the world, we British, American, and, of course, Russian people, and the more we know each other the better it will be. (Applause.)

It is very fine for our men to meet English people and to find that in spite of this unjumpable wall of language that we are very nearly the same sort of people. The sooner our soldiers write home and say how truly lovely the English ladies are, the more jealous the American dames will become and thus force the war to a successful conclusion. (Laughter and applause.) Then I shall have a chance to go and kill the Japanese." (Loud applause.)

General's Pet

Patton, the American tank expert who commanded the Seventh Army in Sicily. He adopted "Willie" after his recent arrival in Britain to take part in second front operations.

GREAT PEOPLE

The Chairman of the local Council, expressed pleasure at the initiation of such a fine club. Towns, he said, were not made by the greatness of buildings but by the greatness of the people who lived in them. (Applause.) In that club, they had seen the greatness of the people who had come forward to assist. (Applause.) He wished the club every success and he wished General Patton, their distinguished visitor, and all those he commanded, a safe and speedy return. (Applause.)

Another speaker said the club had been formed in British Legion headquarters — headquarters which represented a great union of comradeship and friendship which had been formed on the battlefields. (Applause.) A mutual understanding and friendship between the American and British peoples would play a very big part in the future of the world.

"Our task," concluded this speaker, "is to create such a spirit and combination of mutual understanding with all other peace loving nations of the world that no other country can ever dare again to act against us." (Applause.)

Mr. G. A. Armstrong, American Consul, and Mr. G. Mould, of the Ministry of Information, expressed their pride in the club, and also paid tribute to the work of the W.V.S.

The club had been decorated with American and British National flags and the formal proceedings closed with the playing by a band of the National Anthem and the Star Spangled Banner. The remainder of the evening was spent in happy fraternisation.

General Patton was accompanied in his car by "Willie," the bull terrier pet of an R.A.F. pilot who has been shot down over enemy territory.

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